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THE ATONEMENT

A Catholic Restatement

BY

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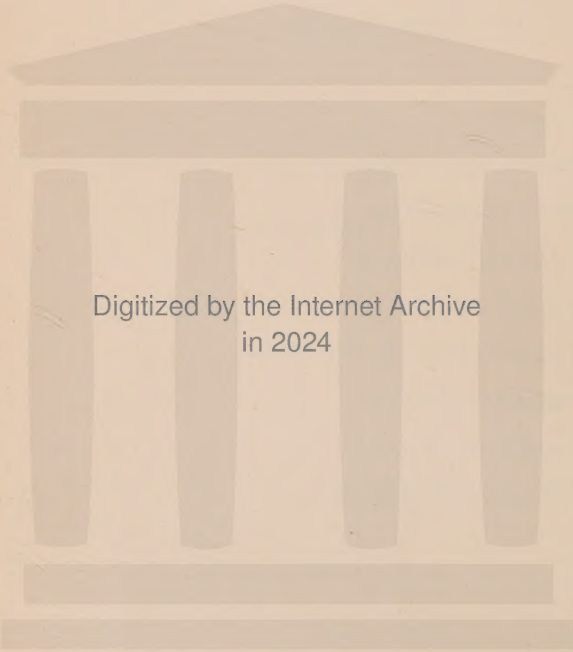
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THE ATONEMENT

INTRODUCTION

THE sufficient reason for writing this small book is that there is, as a matter of fact, no popularly understood doctrine of the Atonement current in the Church of to-day.

There is a general acceptance of the belief that by the Cross our Lord conquered sin and made His life perfect by the act of obedience unto death. Most thoughtful Christians would allow that sin cannot be lightly passed over, and would wish to see in the Cross the measure of the badness of sin and the cost of it. These doctrines are part of the tradition of Christianity ; we are reminded of them again and again in the hymns which we sing and the prayers which we take upon our lips.

But if one asks, How did Christ conquer sin by dying ? How does Christ's unmerited suffering of death alter the penalty on our sins ? What has the Crucifixion really to do with forgiveness ? it is highly doubtful whether we shall find an answer forthcoming. Yet the ordinary Christian ought to have a clear-cut belief as to the meaning of the Cross. The Cross is central to our faith, as preachers are fond of proclaiming. It is fashionable to speak of the Church of the Incarnation, and in certain circles

to emphasize Churchmanship and explain Sacraments as the extension of the Incarnation. But S. Paul says, 'We preach Christ crucified,' and evidently did so. S. Anselm, a thousand years later, taught that God became incarnate in order to make an atonement. Otherwise why did he call his treatise on the Atonement *Cur Deus Homo* ?

S. Paul had a clear-cut doctrine of salvation by the Cross ; he believed and taught that the Christian shares the resurrection life of Christ, dies with Him, and lives in Him. If subsequent generations never rose to the fullness of S. Paul's doctrine, the strongest point of the teaching of the Greek Fathers on the death of Christ was still the identification of the believer with Christ.

The notion that Christ's death paid a debt due to Satan, and that He also spoiled the spoiler of his prey by art yet deeper than his own, was no doubt dualistic and mythological. It was at least clear-cut and probably popular.

The mediaeval doctrine of satisfaction, of which S. Anselm was the first great exponent, did not remain academic. It was intimately connected with the whole idea of merit and penance, matters of very popular concern.

The doctrine of satisfaction offered to God definitely superseded that of a debt paid to Satan. I do not suggest that we need a doctrine to supersede satisfaction ; but that doctrine has become academic. If, as I believe, it is abstract truth, it is not the kind of abstraction which we make. The thesis of this book is that Christ's own life, the perfect life of Man and the life of God, passed into the life of the

Church, by Christ's Sacrifice and Resurrection. That seems to me a doctrine both clear-cut and true. I only wish it were a commonplace.

We should be much nearer than we are to healing our divisions from those outside the Church if we and they did really agree that the New Testament teaches that the life of the Church is the life of Christ. We should solve our own differences over the Sacraments, and see more clearly the right relation of Church and State, if we really believed that the Church is the Body of Christ. Above all, our Churchmanship would be more self-sacrificing, more energetic, and more personal if we saw the Church as the direct result of the Cross. Our worship at the altar would be more intelligent; our desire for the reunion of Christendom and our missionary zeal would be more strong. A new emphasis on sacrifice as the actual purpose and fact in the death of Christ would both re-establish in our minds the need of satisfaction for sin and fill us with a living hope.

A second purpose of the book is to set out the doctrine of the Cross in terms of what happened and happens. S. Anselm quite definitely set out to argue the Atonement 'as if we knew nothing of Christ.' Such argument, however valid from its premisses, appears inconclusive to-day. On the other hand, the really popular preaching of the Cross is built on religious experience. The Cross is said to show us the hideousness of sin, the love of God. It moves us to repentance, to faith, to an answering love, and so to conversion.

It is all very true, it does—if we believe also in its power. But on its own showing this effect of

the Cross is incidental. To believe that Jesus Christ determined to die on the Cross and actually did so in order to produce a moral effect on subsequent generations of men is simply to ignore all that we have any authority for knowing about Jesus Christ. It simply will not stand the test either of the Gospels or the Epistles of the New Testament. It is because we believe that He died for another purpose that the contemplation of the event in all its bearings has such an effect on our dispositions. As a matter of fact the people who do not believe in the other purpose are only moved to admiration. The question is, What was the other purpose ?

Neither abstract thinking nor religious experience supplies us with an adequate doctrine of the Cross. The Christian religion rests on revelation, and revelation ultimately means what God has made known to us through happenings. Modern thought fortunately agrees with the Christian religion. It, too, offers credence only to things which can be shown to have happened. Mathematics, the perfect abstract science, is, I understand, being revolutionized in its higher flights by happenings. Modern psychology stands or falls by whether certain strange events have happened or not. So we arrive at dogma. A hypothesis is a mental flight, a dogma is an approved truth.

So to understand the Atonement we search out what our Lord set out to do by dying, and whether He succeeded, and what happened as a result.

The first four chapters of this book, accordingly, are a sketch of the purpose of Christ's ministry up to and including His death, as it is described in the

Gospels. From my knowledge of ordinary Church people I expect this will be new to them. All I mean is that the ordinary instruction given from pulpits and in Sunday schools has not quite kept pace with Biblical research. Students will not find anything new in this sketch, except perhaps in the matter of our Lord's treatment of apocalyptic. Whether they will agree with it is quite another question. A person who makes a sketch is necessarily giving an interpretation of a record. The truth of an interpretation ultimately stands or falls by criticism and by corroboration of results.

The last four chapters, with some digression, are an attempt to examine how far the purpose of Christ is fulfilled in the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church being as a mere matter of history the outcome of the life of Christ.

The doctrine that the Church is the life of Christ, that to be in the Church is to be in Christ, may be called a mystical doctrine. But while it is true that the Church is fittingly called the mystical Body of Christ, and that anything like a full apprehension of Churchmanship involves a deep personal experience which is of the nature of mysticism, the dominant fact is that the Church came into existence through deeds enacted in history and that the understanding of its real nature comes by the interpretation of facts. The process is from events through dogma to experience; and this I believe was the process in S. Paul's mind. Though it is impossible to be consistent it seems better to apply the term 'mysticism' technically to a process which begins with experience.

Another explanation which ought to be given concerns the title. No unauthorized individual has the right to make a Catholic restatement even of a doctrine not formally defined. By the title I merely mean to inform readers that the book is an exposition which comes to a Catholic conclusion.

The whole Church is keeping the nineteenth centenary of our Lord's Crucifixion. I am hoping that it may be well timed to put forward a study of that event for popular consideration. Nineteen hundred years ago, in Judaea, the Cross was set up. It has stretched out its arms over the world of men ever since. We cannot better observe the commemoration of the Cross than by thinking freshly and clearly of what happened on it.

CHAPTER I

THE PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY

‘ **W**HY did Jesus Christ die on the Cross ? ’
That is the question which any Christian naturally asks when he is faced with the Cross as the symbol of his religion, and told that the Cross is the central doctrine of the Christian faith.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good ;
That we might go at last to heaven
Saved by His precious Blood.

That verse comes from what is usually described as a children’s hymn, but though it is childish in language, it propounds a great theological belief. In fact, it states the doctrine of the Atonement. But the verse does not explain what happened. It states what we believe about the Cross ; that it is concerned with forgiveness and amendment and salvation.

The next verse carries the statement a stage further, is in fact the beginning of an explanation. Incidentally it rules out the explanation sometimes given that the Crucifixion merely makes us penitent and so helps us to try harder to be good.

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin.

This is a mysterious statement ; it whets the

curiosity. One can imagine an intelligent child being stirred by it to all kinds of questions which will take his teacher all his time to answer.

The meaning of the Cross, that is, the doctrine of the Atonement, has generally been considered too much in isolation, apart from the rest of the works of Jesus Christ in His ministry, and apart from any actual effects that can be observed as the result of it. But if the death of Christ was really included in Christ's purpose, then it is at least probable that the reason of it will be found in connection with the purpose which Christ had before Him in His ministry.

So before being able to give a satisfactory answer as to what Christ meant by His death, we must first come to a clear understanding of what He meant by His life. Again, if at the end of His life Christ believed that something absolutely necessary could only be achieved by His death, it is at least reasonable to inquire whether anything was achieved, and if so what it was.

There are a few 'ifs' in the last paragraph on which a good deal hangs. We are supposing that Christ had some great ruling purpose in His life, and that all His actions were trained to that end. We are supposing that His death was designed by Himself, or at least willingly accepted, still with the same purpose in view.

We are about to pursue our inquiry into what that purpose was. The undertaking is common enough in theology, but it is not perhaps the ordinary way in which Christians are led to consider the Gospel, in Sunday sermons, in pious books, and in

Sunday school lessons and Bible classes. It is more common to treat the life of Christ as a treasure chest, from which one can pick out and exhibit jewels—jewels of words, of human insight, jewels of character and love, jewels of prayer and red rubies of sacrifice. But the gems are not strung together on a chain of purpose which makes the whole life and death one connected effort and achievement.

So this preliminary inquiry means considering Jesus Christ as a great historical character. It is conceivable that the treasure-box method is the only correct way to understand Christ, that He lived without a purpose. In that case the whole inquiry falls to the ground. But all the evidence of our records supports the idea that He was a Man with a purpose. The first two verses of S. Mark's Gospel as it stands, the infancy narratives of S. Matthew and S. Luke, the prologue to S. John's Gospel, announce a character with a purpose. None of these passages would be chosen as unexceptionable historical sections, but they are conclusive in witnessing the impression of the Apostolic Church that Jesus came to the world with a task to perform.

Again, it is also conceivable that Christ had a purpose in His ministry, and that His death signalized the failure of His purpose; and in that case the consequences of His life and death which are written across the history of the last nineteen hundred years were either a kind of happy miscarriage or a disastrous entail, according to the point of view of the critic who holds that opinion.

Such a reading of the facts recorded at the opening of the Christian era was presumably the position

of the intellectual pagan opponents of the Christian religion. In quite a different way it was also the opinion of the school to which the name 'Modernist' was originally given. The Abbé Loisy may be taken as representative of it. The best and perhaps the only way to answer it is to be able to show that Christ had a definite purpose in His ministry, that His death was meant by Him to carry that same purpose to fruition, and that the consequences, which did as a matter of fact follow, correspond to the purpose.

We have not yet exhausted the possibilities which gather round this supposed purpose of Christ. It might be that the ministry and the Cross were consistent in their purpose but that the actual consequences were a miscarriage. This is the view of the school of Liberal Protestantism, unless it can seriously be maintained that the primitive Church was at all like modern Protestantism. Or it might be that the ministry, the Cross, and primitive Christianity were all in line, but that something better, truer, and purer has evolved out of them in our own age.

All this shows how very serious this consideration of the purpose of Jesus Christ is to our religion. It is not merely a question of the right form a dogma should take; rather the reliability of Christ is at stake, and the integrity of our religion as practised is being examined.

What, then, was this purpose?

John Baptist came preaching the kingdom of God. Christ associated Himself with the message, and accepted the baptism for Himself. Connected

with this baptism is an experience recorded by the evangelists which suggests the apprehension of the Father's favour on His mission.

The temptation in the wilderness can only be intelligibly interpreted as a mental and spiritual struggle over possible ways of winning His purpose. It was a renunciation of the ways that would suggest themselves to man in favour of God's way and God's will. When John was imprisoned Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, 'The time is fulfilled.'

He proceeded to gather a band of disciples and to teach the people. His teaching had the note of authority, and was subversive of accepted standards; it looked forward to an imminent change in life, as we should say, in religion. The law and prophets were to be fulfilled: seed of a new word was being sown: persecution would be occasioned. Undoubtedly it was this element in His preaching which stirred the multitudes to enthusiasm, so that the doors of the house in which He was speaking were thronged, and people came by thousands after Him when He was trying to escape to a desert place. It was not the charm of simple words and the thrill of sincerity only. His preaching aroused expectation. He taught the multitudes by parables, and about half the parables recorded are definitely parables of the kingdom of God, describing some feature of a kingdom yet to be, but surely imminent.

To the disciples He gave further teaching in explanation of the parables, because unto them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.

He went about as a worker of miracles, chiefly

miracles of healing on those who were sick and possessed with evil spirits. In the Gospel records the miracles certainly figure as a cause of His popularity, yet there is a continual tendency on the part of Jesus Christ to deprecate this effect. The evangelists often see in the miracles examples of Jesus' compassion, but there is also an emphasis laid on the faith either of the patient or the patient's friends, and there is the suggestion of the output of power on the part of Christ.

The capacity for faith Christ reckoned as a personal qualification for the kingdom. It has been lately suggested that the campaign of healing may have been significant of a definite assault on demonic powers. At the same time He would not allow the sufferers or the healed to hail Him as the Christ because, so says the evangelist, His hour was not yet.

The place of the healing miracles in the ministry of Christ, and especially their relation to the preparation of the kingdom, is of great interest, especially perhaps as the most recent literary caricature of Christ chooses to call Him the Conjuror. One does not want to ride a horse to death, but there is certainly a good deal of reason to suppose that the power of healing and the power to be healed were regarded by Christ as part of the scheme for the calling up of the kingdom of God. 'If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come among you.'

At last, at Caesarea Philippi, He invites the disciples to confess their faith. 'Whom do men say that I am? . . . Whom say ye that I am?' S. Peter

speaks up, 'Thou art the Christ.' The Christ, to anticipate what has yet to be said, is the Messiah, the King, the Bringer of the kingdom. This confession by S. Peter of the Christhood of Jesus was the climax of the public ministry. It marked the achievement of the first part of the purpose of Jesus. It was the rock¹ on which the Church should be built. Well was the Apostle called *Petros*, because on this rock, this *petra*, the Messiahship of Jesus, Jesus Christ would build His Church.

His words to S. Peter, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven,' obviously do not mean that nothing had yet been said by a human being to suggest the truth now proclaimed. The possessed had so named Him; the Galilean enthusiasts had embarrassed Him by their trying to act upon the same belief. S. Peter's avowal was not a shock to the other disciples. Common sense compels us to suppose that the Twelve had talked it over again and again with one another.

¹ There are three, and only three, possible interpretations of Christ's words 'on this rock':

1. The person who made the confession—Peter.
2. The spirit in which he made the confession—Faith.
3. The truth which he confessed—the Messiahship.

The first seems to me a bathos. S. Peter and his successors may or may not be the vicars of Christ on earth, but the Messiahship of Jesus is and was an immeasurably more important fact.

The second is the modern heresy of subjectivism, faith in faith, and is out of tune with the Gospels and the occasion.

The third, besides seeming required by the occasion, has the advantage also of corresponding with the facts as they subsequently happened.

But in that clear statement by the leader of the Twelve Christ recognized the whole-hearted faith of the disciple. He had not spoken as the desperate demoniac; not as the grateful patient; not as the ignorant but enthusiastic mob; but as the disciple who had caught his Master's purpose. He had confessed in the power of a personal faith which was inspired by the revelation of the Father in heaven.

The occasion was the turning-point in the ministry. The healing campaign and the broadcast preaching in Galilee are brought to a finish. The confession of S. Peter is followed then and there by what we may call the announcement of the Atonement. Soon His steps are set toward Jerusalem, for the Son of Man has to suffer and be put to death.

The parables now spoken in the presence of enemies become parables of warning in which the kingdom is taken from the Jews, the natural members, and given to others, and He Himself appears in the parables as the Ruler Who is to come to His own.

He makes a kingly and yet humble entry into the capital in fulfilment, the evangelist suggests, of the prophecy of Zechariah, 'Behold, thy King cometh, meek and riding upon an ass.' He confesses His claim to be Christ to His Jewish judge in terms of bold warning: and the only charge which the Jewish accusers can lay against Him with any colour to the Roman procurator is that He made Himself to be a king.

The superscription of His accusation fixed over

His head on the Cross was, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.'

There can hardly be any doubt of the purpose of Christ, the one ruling purpose which determined the conduct of His ministry from the Baptism to the Cross. It was to inaugurate the kingdom of God in the consciousness that He Himself was the King.

Nevertheless, simple as this conclusion seems, and based on the plain facts recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, it must be admitted that it is not the account that would have been given by the numerous writers of lives of Christ who flourished in the last century. Apart from the lecture rooms of German Universities and the scholarly volumes of their professors, the ordinary New Testament lessons, and the other presentations of Jesus Christ which most of us received in our youth, were also lacking in this emphasis on the kingdom which is found in the sketch above given. My own recollection is that the teaching I received, which was very careful and thorough, asserted our Lord's divinity and portrayed His personal character. It brought out His insistence on faith, His example of self-sacrifice, His dependence on God the Father. Each parable had its separate lesson. I was brought up from childhood as a Catholic, and certainly understood that Christ founded the Church—a visible body with its Sacraments—but this part of the teaching was conveyed by proof texts, there was no attempt to relate the ministry of Christ as a whole with the Church that succeeded it.

Sermons, I am sure, then, as now, drew out the

moral lessons of our Lord's character and life. The Crucifixion appeared as the supreme example of self-sacrifice, as an event winning our love and faith, and of course also as the prelude to the Resurrection; and the Resurrection and Ascension were to me the beginning of the Catholic Church as I knew it.

I mention this naive bit of autobiography because it corresponds doubtless with the experience of very many, though with many others the Catholic colouring, which really gave a kind of *raison d'être* to the earlier Gospel narrative, was missing.

I remember learning rather later than childhood that the Gospels did not really describe Jesus as founding a Church; and in the earliest days of my ministry I preached with vehemence that the Cross saved because it changed men and brought them to repentance. I had not really studied Ritschlianism, and Dr. Rashdall's book on the Atonement was not written. If I had thought that it was Protestant teaching I should certainly have been prejudiced against it. But I felt instinctively or by training that the Cross was supremely important; the subjective effect is tremendous if one is prepared to let it be, and I simply knew no other tenable doctrine, since paying the devil or appeasing God were ideas that seemed to me totally unreal.

My own interests being at that time philosophical rather than historical I was not consciously aware of any lack of connection between the ministry of Christ, the sacrifice on the Cross, and the rise of the Church; but when half-way through my first curacy I read Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, it

was as though a sudden enlightenment had come to me. I hardly noticed the bitter conclusion to which the author appeared to come; I saw with an enthusiasm which I can only describe as a kind of conversion the real drift of the Gospel narrative, and the Ministry, the Sacrifice, and the Church became coherently the work of the Incarnate Son of God.

Meanwhile, coherence had been attained in quite a different manner in the intellectual school of German theology. There was no counter influence of Tractarian religion. Orthodox Lutheranism, heavily weighted with uncompromising dogmas, had given way to the religious culture of a progressive and satisfied age known as the Enlightenment. Armed with the weapon of higher criticism, Liberal Protestants arrived at a representation of Christ, not only disencumbered of miracles but shorn of supernatural qualities and claims. They found in Him a moral teacher, intent on freeing religion of formalism; teaching piety, kindness, and love, the nearness and benevolence of God the Father; not intending to found a Church, but to propagate an ethical idea which would germinate in those who offered Him the faith of loving Him. The positive element of the teaching was summarized in Harnack's *What is Christianity?* as the teaching of the Fatherhood of God.

The Gospels, however, were full of these allusions to the kingdom. There were two ways of disposing of them. One was to regard the kingdom of God as meaning just the rule of God. Quite lately I have seen it urged that the Aramaic word behind the Greek, *basileia*, means 'rule.' This is a good

example of the discredited fashion of arguing from texts or words, and ignoring their setting, in this case the apocalyptic ideas and literature of the time. The phrase so constantly on the lips of Christ was thus reduced to mean the doing of God's will, the fulfilment of a deeper and more spiritual moral law.

It is extraordinarily difficult to see why, if this was His intention, Christ should have adopted such a very provocative way of declaring it, and why there should have been need of all the secrecy and misunderstanding to which the Gospels bear witness, and why He should have been put to death.

It is not surprising that the school which accepted this interpretation of the mission of Jesus found little real use for the doctrine of the Incarnation beside that of adding dignity to the Christian religion ; and as a matter of fact the Incarnation, in the sense of the divinity of Christ, continues to pass out of the creed of the followers of this school. But critically it is not only the high doctrine of the Incarnation which is weakened. It is even more difficult to account for any place which Christ claims for Himself in the scheme of His mission.

The tremendous claims that He makes on the trust, the loyalty, and the self-sacrifice of His followers ; the confidence that He possessed of satisfying their needs ; the peculiar and unique relationship which he claims with the heavenly Father, do not fit the character of one who was a moral teacher only. To parody Mark Antony, persuasion should be made of gentler stuff. The bearing of Jesus Christ towards His disciples and His age, gentle, serving, patient as He was, led His believers to regard Him as the

Author of a supernatural salvation, and His enemies to hang Him on a cross.

To suppose, for instance, that S. Peter's confession meant that the speaker really accepted Jesus as the divine example of the goodness He taught, is more than we can believe, or that if he had meant it he would have expressed himself as he did. The Christhood, the Messiahship, would have to go the way of the divinity in order to make this revised Gospel believable. The Christ of a reduced faith is the heir of a Jesus of imaginary history.

The other way of dealing with the references to the kingdom was to call in higher criticism to explain them out of the narrative. The disciples and the first generation of Christians became possessed of the idea of a second coming, and read it back into the sayings and actions of Jesus. So the Gospel narratives, passing through the hands of successive editors, overlaid the simple story with a covering of Messianic beliefs and language.

But higher criticism is a science and cannot in the long run be forced to produce the results that are desired. Sane criticism will not stand the strain thus put upon it. The kingdom of God and the Christhood of Jesus are the fabric of the Gospel and refuse to be treated as colouring matter.

This Christ of the Liberal Protestant schools proceeded to de-materialize thirty years ago when Albrecht Schweitzer, then a young German lecturer, published his book, known in the English translation as *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*.

In that book he reviews the whole course of 'Lives of Christ.' He shows how these lives are sometimes

far-fetched, sometimes jejune, but in most cases based on the preconceived tenets of the critics. He makes them appear more than a little ridiculous. He proceeds to depict Christ as he sees Him in the Gospels. It is the Christ Who came to inaugurate the kingdom of God.

Written by a scholar, versed in and supported by 'extreme' criticism, with a youthful freedom from tradition and the conventions of the schools, witty and captivating in style, yet betraying a sincerity that is pathetic in view of the conclusions he reached, the book was epoch-making in the study of the origins of Christianity.

It was not only a great event in the progress of scholarship, it knocked the bottom out of Liberal Protestantism itself, because it cut away the rational and scriptural ground on which Liberal Protestantism (I am not sure that the qualifying adjective is necessary) was based. The scholars of the Enlightenment and Harnack's *What is Christianity?* provided a rational background for the Lutheranism of German culture. Schweitzer and his followers, combined with the profound disillusionment of the disastrous war, have made that religious culture obsolete, and led to entirely different movements of which Otto, Heiler, and Karl Barth are representative. Whither those movements are tending we cannot say, but the emphasis on the supernatural, the sacramental, the objective shows the new point of departure. It is the Jesus Christ of the actual Gospel.

How far this applies to the religion of Modern Nonconformity or of the Established Church in

England, it is not the business of this study on the Atonement to point out. I only include it in the beginning of our inquiry to emphasize that it really matters to our everyday religion what answers we give to the two questions propounded by Christ Himself:

‘ Whom say ye that I am ? ’ and ‘ What think ye of Christ ? ’

CHAPTER II

FULFILLING THE PROPHETS

‘THE kingdom of God,’ and the titles ‘Christ,’ ‘Messiah,’ ‘Son of Man,’ belong to a circle of ideas which was not new at the time of the beginning of the Gospel narrative. They had a history in Jewish thought and literature, and a place in contemporary Jewish religious speculation.

When John Baptist preached ‘The kingdom of God is at hand,’ he was announcing something striking enough but certainly not unintelligible to his hearers. Indeed, it was because the idea of the kingdom was familiar that the news of its nearness was so exciting. When and if he asserted ‘There standeth One among you . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire’ it was calculated to arouse an expectation in earnest disciples which had only waited stimulation by a prophetic voice. Now the fact that the purpose of the mission of Jesus Christ was expressed in the language of historical and contemporary ideas helps us, as it helped His contemporaries, to understand the meaning of His ministry. What else is expression but the putting of intention or idea into terms which have sufficient associations to convey their nature or meaning?

If a statesman to-day, in view of the modern

impasse, had a plan for the reorganization of the world, he would borrow and use some such phrase as the United States of Europe or a Commonwealth of Nations to clothe his idea. It would be much more than a metaphor; the familiar words would express his scheme. Incidentally he would probably be assassinated if he showed any signs of succeeding!

On the other hand, the terms do create a problem of their own. The enthusiasts of Galilee who wanted to make Jesus King, the disciples when they asked, 'Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' were victims of misunderstanding. Our difficulty also is to disentangle the actual scheme of Christ from the mass of material from which He borrowed to express it.

Christ was not using historical and contemporary language to express a plan which was in truth different from the ideas to which the language properly belonged. On the other hand, He was not adopting a ready-made rôle. There was no consistent picture of the prophetic Messiah, nor of the apocalyptic Christ, and the prophetic still less agreed with the apocalyptic character. But in both He saw an adumbration of the true, and in both an opportunity of clothing His mission in a form not entirely strange to the intelligence of the people to whom He came. It was an essential fact of His mission that He came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfil them. The words which S. Luke ascribes to Him in the conversation on the way to Emmaus, 'Behoved it not the Christ to suffer?' and the exposition from the Law and the Prophets of the things concerning Himself, may be taken to represent the

truth of His thoughts about His work. Similarly if there was a popular expectation of divine action in the world which found literary expression in apocalypses and psalms, it was not merely that the terminology was useful but that the ideas behind it were true of Him.

The literature and the popular ideas to which we are referring are usually described as Messianic, and our Lord in this character is named Messiah. As this book is meant for quite ordinary Christians, I may be excused for reminding them that the word *Messiah* is neither more nor less than *Christ*. The ambiguous terms 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God' attract attention as having Messianic significance. There is no ambiguity in the word 'Christ.' It is a direct challenge wherever it occurs in the Gospels; and whenever it is used in the rest of the New Testament (where it has become the regular title of the Lord of the Church) the whole connotation of that mysterious title Messiah is involved in the name Christ. Christ is merely a translation into Greek.

Messianic ideas, or let us say, Christ ideas, are to be found in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and in the apocalyptic and eschatological literature of the age immediately preceding and succeeding the lifetime of Jesus Christ. That the general idea was in the air as well as in a curious literature, and had taken hold of the popular mind, is proved by the rise of political impostors from time to time claiming to be the Christ. It was a charge worth laying before Pontius Pilate by the adversaries of Christ, and sufficient in the circumstances to

secure a conviction. A quiet and pious Jew like Simeon is described as one who was 'waiting for the consolation of Israel.' A respectable councillor like Joseph of Arimathaea 'also waited for the kingdom of God.' An unorthodox woman of no reputation is mentioned as saying, 'I know that Messias cometh.'

As for the prophets of the canon, their witness is very varied. Generally speaking, they were preachers of righteousness. They were concerned to demand truth and justice, to denounce extortion, luxury, and cruelty. They were also propagandists of the worship of Jehovah against the prevalent cults of Baalim. The message of Isaiah—the Isaiah of Hezekiah's reign—and Jeremiah was often political. It was Jehovah's will for the nation that they proclaimed.

But throughout the earlier period of the prophets, first Assyria then Babylon was hanging like a thunder-cloud over all the little nations, and Israel and Judah on the highway to Egypt were doomed. The prophets viewed this external danger as a warning against the internal corruption of their nation. Then the chosen people were in exile, or the remnant, the impoverished children of the captivity, had returned to a ruined city. They were surrounded by foes; their glories were in the past. In such circumstances the message of the prophets was one of deliverance. Chastening, repentance, a new heart, deliverance from the Lord, a return of strength, rising from the proclamation of a day of the Lord, of vengeance upon enemies, to the vision of a golden age in the future, when swords should

be beaten into pruning hooks and the wild beast should eat straw like the ox, and a little child should lead them—such are the well-known themes that fill the pages from Isaiah to Malachi in the canon of the Old Testament.

Every now and then the prophecies become personal. 'There shall come a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him' (*Isa.* i. 1). 'And thou Bethlehem . . . out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel' (*Micah* v. 2). 'Unto us a Child is born . . . and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (*Isa.* ix. 6). 'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation' (*Zech.* ix. 9). 'Then shall the Lord go forth and fight . . . and His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives' (*Zech.* xiv. 3, 4). And there are other predictions of the restoration of the kingdom, or of righteousness and the return of the house of David.

Now it is not necessary or even relevant to our purpose to decide the real meaning of all these prophecies to the prophets who spoke them or the people to whom they were addressed. Undoubtedly a few of them are predictions of a vaguely future deliverer. Some of them perhaps refer to quite contemporary incidents of which we have no knowledge, e.g. the sign to King Ahaz of the virgin who should bear a child to be called Emmanuel (*Isa.* viii). In some the Lord Jehovah Himself is pictured

as acting. In others the people are personified in a single character. While the deliverance desired and prophesied is often national and political, the return of independence, power, and liberty, yet the ideal of righteousness is never absent from Israel's prophets; and the kingdom or day of the Lord is one of justice, goodness, and peace, on the one hand, and of pure service of the one true God, on the other. Again, while the deliverance often reads like the aggrandizement of Israel, the conception of the coming age now and again broadens out to include all nations, as in the prophecy of Zephaniah.

But such considerations belong to the study of the times in which the prophets preached and wrote. What really concerns us is the interpretation likely to be put upon them at the time when Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth, and Saul of Tarsus was being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.

We see at once that whatever misgivings we, with our historical sense and critical attitude, may have about the Messianic character of particular passages, not only such definite prophecies as we have quoted above, but others to which we would never think of attaching Messianic significance, could be freely quoted as predictions of the Messiah or Christ.

S. Matthew is especially interested in pointing out the fulfilment of prophecy. He begins his story with the words, 'The birth of Jesus the Messiah was on this wise,' and goes on to show the accord of the virgin-birth with Isaiah's prophecy of the 'Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us.' Within the next few verses comes Micah's prophecy as explaining where Christ should be born.

The flight into, and return from, Egypt are described as the fulfilment of Hosea's words, 'I called my son out of Egypt' (*Hos.* xi. 1), a purely mystical interpretation of a reference to the dim past even in Hosea's day.

S. Mark also begins his Gospel with references to Malachi and Isaiah in the second and third verses of his first chapter.

S. Luke, in his narrative of the Infancy, gives us the three Christian hymns known to us as the *Benedictus*, *Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimittis*. The first and last are clearly Messianic and in the prophetic strain. The infant John is hailed as the forerunner of One Who is described as the Dayspring from on high, 'to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.' Simeon greets One Who is to be the means of God's salvation, prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of Thy people Israel. The Song of Mary is an echo of the Song of Hannah over the birth of the first of Israel's line of prophets, and her Child is God's help to Israel promised to the forefathers Abraham and his seed. It is S. Luke also who tells us of Christ opening His mission at Nazareth by reading the words of the later Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath sent Me . . .'

It is interesting and impressive that the three Synoptic Gospels which are based on earlier documents common to all should all begin with prophetic references which are manifestly not due to the common sources. It shows the interest taken in the

earliest stage of the Christian Church in its prophetic antecedents.

Quite possibly the Christian writers of the first century had a propagandist motive in showing that the new sect was a legitimate development of the prophetic faith. They were maintaining that the Christ had come, that Jesus was the Christ; they naturally would have recourse to the scriptures of the prophets. The point is that they could not have argued from prophetic texts if that had not been the kind of argument that went home.

It is the more far-fetched applications which best serve our case. The prophecies, 'And thou Bethlehem,' or, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,' might be useful texts in any case, but no one would have thought of quoting, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son,' or, 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced,' if such a use of Scripture had not been in vogue and acceptable at the time.

There cannot be, and indeed is not, any doubt that the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms were freely interpreted as references to Messianic hopes of their age in popular thought, and that such exegesis was familiar in the scriptural studies of the Jerusalem schools.

What was true of A.D. 50 was true also of A.D. 20. What became a habit of mind to Mark or Matthew would have been also the religious and intellectual environment of Jesus of Nazareth in the years before He proclaimed Himself. It is attractive, and not very far-fetched, to think that the Child Jesus tarried behind at Jerusalem at the age of twelve years in order to learn the teaching of the leaders of Jewish

thought on the subject of the Christ. Taking the boyish incident as authentic, the result of Luke's diligent inquiry, we gather that there was evidently something the Boy wanted to find out. He was found hearing the doctors and asking them questions, and He seems to have thought that His Mother ought to have guessed where He was, implying that there were mutual confidences between them.

I am not maintaining, and do not believe, that either the prophets or the apocalyptic ideas of the day which we are about to consider inspired Jesus as child or man to take upon Himself the rôle of Christ. Jesus in His own mind knew that He was come to do the work of the heavenly Father, that God was His Father in a sense that was unique to Himself. We cannot formulate the self-consciousness of any man, until the man and circumstance have given it some kind of expression. He was God incarnate, but that is not a character or rôle except to a maniac. In the religion of His race He found ideas and language which enabled Him to give form to an otherwise ineffable intuition.

'Thou art the Christ.' 'Blessed be thou, Simon; flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but My Father which is in heaven. On this rock I will build My Church.'

Among prophetic ideas is the character of the Suffering Servant portrayed by the Isaiah of the Exile, and appearing possibly in Zechariah and certainly in some of the canonical Psalms. Christian writers and preachers after the Crucifixion applied the description to the Passion of Christ, as Philip did in teaching the Ethiopian eunuch.

The Gospels lead us to suppose that Christ had connected the redemptive sufferings of the Servant with His own future Passion and Sacrifice. The passage read at Nazareth comes from the later Isaiah, but not from a section describing suffering. To the Jews He suggests that He is the Stone which the builders rejected. The warning that the Son of Man must be put to death, and the subject of the colloquy with Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration story, suggest a reference to the Servant. I am not sure that the strongest proof is not the fourth word from the Cross. A man does not quote a hymn in order to utter a cry of despair; Jesus Christ may well have uttered aloud the first words of that psalm of suffering redemption when He realized that suffering and that redemption upon His own Cross, and knew after the darkness that the passion described in the psalm was fulfilled in His own death. But it is clear that no one before Christ Himself connected the Suffering Servant with the Messiah. Peter was horrified at the notion; the disciples on the Emmaus road were slow of heart to believe; to the Jews it was a stumbling-block.

That Christ made the connection shows His independence of current teaching, and His original recourse to Scripture. How much does all this help us to understand the nature of the kingdom or the rôle of the Christ? The scriptural and prophetic forecasts are too vague and too conflicting to give much content to either. They suggest a Christ Who was to be the hope of the true Israel, the ethical character of the reign He was to inaugurate, possibly the opening of the service of God to other nations

besides the Jews. The Servant passages add the work of the Redeemer to that of the King. The only thing that matters to us, of course, is that Christ so understood them, and He alone. What they originally meant is entirely beside the point.

The scriptural passages, then, give us a bare outline of the character assumed by Christ in His life. They do not help us to discern much about the kingdom. In fact, the kingdom is hardly an Old Testament conception except in so far as it is implied in the thought of the King. In the Old Testament Jewry is the kingdom, there was no room for any other.

But it is the kingdom, and a new kingdom something other than Jewry, which rings through the Gospels. If we consider the matter practically we can understand the difference. To the prophets the kingdom was there, the ideal King was wanted. Therefore they prophesied of the King. In the Gospels the King was there; He was talking, His identity had to be established, and it was. But His kingdom was not, after all, Jewry; it was an unknown quantity, therefore the emphasis on the kingdom.

Jesus, starting from His accepted character of Christhood, must have faced the question, what He was going to effect and how. Something of this searching we perhaps witness in the account of the Temptation. From that point, as I understand the story, there was no hesitation on His part. It was clear to Him what the kingdom was to be. The teaching, the gathering of followers round Himself, the Sacrifice, was His programme. Necessity of action made the kingdom prominent.

But the Old Testament anticipations of Christ only cover a part of the New Testament language about Christ and His kingdom; and they leave unilluminated all the most difficult passages.

In the Gospels and among the words of Christ there is a catena of passages describing the coming of the kingdom, indications of time, combined with forecasts of judgement, and suggestive of the end of an age and the coming of a new order. As such matter is anyhow to some extent symbolical, we should naturally look to find it paralleled in other writings. For light on this we must leave the canon of the Old Testament and go to the documents of the time, the apocalypses and eschatologies which seem to be the source of the language freely used by Christ in describing His purpose and the work which He had set before Himself to accomplish.

CHAPTER III

THE APOCALYPSE OF CHRIST

THE nature of apocalyptic and eschatological literature is indicated by the names applied to it. The last book of the New Testament is called the Apocalypse of S. John. It denotes a vision, or series of visions, picturing in vivid, figurative, or mystical language either the real though hidden nature of mundane events or things which are yet to come to pass.

An apocalypse is not necessarily a prediction of the future. Often it is a vision or description of events current or even past in terms of a counterpart in heavenly places. For instance, the description in the Biblical apocalypse of the war in heaven between Michael and the Devil (incidentally described as past, not future) is certainly to be understood as the seer's vision of the actual conflict enacted in the present on earth among the seven Churches which he loved. There were already martyrs for the Faith. The growth of the harassed Christian communities desperately prevailing over the surrounding heathenism was to John on Patmos the war of the kingdom. In the heavenly places Michael the Prince was warring with Satan the adversary. He lets out what is really in his mind by the words, 'And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the

word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the death.' On the other hand, in the Book of Daniel, which belongs to apocalyptic not to prophetic literature and is late in date, past events concerned with the rise of kingdoms and the destruction of peoples and catastrophes of religion are described as mystical predictions of the future, the writer adopting the character and pseudonym of a worthy of the Babylonian exile.

This common characteristic of apocalyptic requires to be borne in mind when considering the bearing of apocalypses of the time on Christ's work and language. Apocalyptic does not necessarily guarantee that the event described is future or, what is more important, that it is supernatural in the sense of defying the ordinary limitations of physical nature.

This is no doubt a stumbling-block to the modern reader, and even, it would appear, to some students ; but we must remember that the age of the Gospels was the time in which apocalypses were being written. This kind of symbolism was current coin in the thought of the time.

Eschatology, on the other hand, means the science or knowledge of the end of things. It has a recurrent fascination for mankind. Sects and individuals are constantly arising nowadays with the message that the world is coming to an end the year after next.

The end of all things is a natural enough expectation. Great natural disasters and astronomical possibilities suggest it. Even natural science holds forth the possibility, and sometimes threatens its necessity ;

though whether the world is to freeze to death, become candescent gas, or fall off into illimitable space on a relative curve remains uncertain.

Pessimism may suggest it as the only possible relief from the intolerable strain of existence; or optimism may grasp it as the fulfilment of unquenchable hope. Christian teaching, in which we can include the recorded teaching of Christ, uses the idea of the end to emphasize the fact and certainty of judgement. The value of the idea of the end is to establish the absolute truth and infallible basis of the judgement of God.

The modern preacher in his Advent sermon, who does not hesitate to say that there is a judgement inevitable and automatically just attending on human action, on repentance, on faith, on the use of the means of grace, a judgement that is always being passed, is innocent of any stain of Modernism. By the time that the Fourth Gospel was written Christ is recorded as saying the same kind of thing in His dialogues with the Jews. But as revelations or apocalypses may refer not to the future but to the present or even to the past, so eschatology may concern a relative and not the absolute end.

This relative end is called the end of the age or era. The Greek word (*aeon*) translated 'age' is a vague word. It appears, for instance, in the plural in the familiar words which end English prayers, 'for ever and ever,' or, 'world without end'; literally, 'for the ages of the ages.'

The singular word, 'age,' is not therefore a very definite word. This may be a warning to those who hope that in considering eschatology they are to

deal with words of Teutonic clarity or precision. The language of eschatology is apocalyptic, and we shall look in vain for any clear distinction between the end of the age, the end of the material world, and the end of all things, if indeed the last is ever contemplated.

Now, in looking for the bearing of apocalyptic and eschatology on the purpose and language of Christ, we should naturally have in mind three things:

1. Any definite ideas taken over from apocalypses.
2. The influences of the language employed by these writings on the language used by Christ.
3. The spirit of apocalypse, which in the case of Christ, Who was not dreaming but acting, will take the form of momentous action. For it is one thing to receive a revelation and another thing to be one.

The ideas and the language will help us in Biblical understanding and prepare us for the apocalypse of Christ Himself. This is what really matters in our present inquiry.

The Messianic banquet, the sitting on thrones judging the tribes of Israel, the Son of Man seated in glory on the clouds, and separating the sheep from the goats, are instances of apocalyptic ideas. But when we come to a close view of these pictured events they seem to pass into the category of language and imagery rather than to be definite or tangible ideas. The Son of Man coming in the clouds with glory, the attendance of angels, the signs in the heaven, the sound of trumpets, the disturbance of the heavenly bodies, such is the language

of apocalyptic. I shall return at the end of this chapter to the appraisement of this language.

The apocalyptic character of the mission of Jesus Christ consisted not in borrowing from rather monotonous revelations ideas or even language, though there is plenty of the latter, but in the original apocalypse of His own purpose and of His conception of Himself.

He said He came to fulfil the prophets ; He never said He came to fulfil Enoch, but He was Himself and to Himself the apocalypse. His use of the characteristic imagery about Himself and about the kingdom guides us to apprehend His thoughts about Himself and the way He conceived the kingdom, but it does not in the least suggest that He was limited to other people's ready-made visions. Why should it ?

It was apocalyptic in action that He conceived, in fact He had to. Daniel, Enoch, and Solomon were live literature, but still literature. His revelation was of something being done. When revelation is transferred from writing to the field of action, it loses probably in picturesque detail, it gains the greater thrill of 'the real thing.' It was to this apprehension that S. Peter jumped at Caesarea Philippi. The revelation of Jesus Christ spoke to some extent the language of the literary apocalyptists. He could assume for Himself their titles as that of the Son of Man, but His was a certainty which they could only pretend. They gathered cohorts in heaven ; He called twelve disciples in Galilee. They talked of dominion over fiends ; He commanded the devils to come out of the poor wretches who were

possessed. They saw with a fine frenzy the viceroy of God in mid-heaven; He won acceptance of His claim at Caesarea Philippi.

He was there to inaugurate the kingdom that should fulfil the destinies of the Chosen People of God. His kingdom was not of this world, though it should be in it, formed of men and women. It was to be a supernatural kingdom, yet men were to bear authority in it, that whatsoever they bound on earth should be bound in heaven.

Above all, it had a secret of life and power, and He Himself was the secret. By His life and presence the kingdom should live. As He spoke to them on earth the kingdom of God was already among them. It would not come by observation, it would be found of those who knew Him. And so at the last His life was to be offered in sacrifice that they might have the life to live by.

The Son of Man—and the name He chose was apocalyptic though evidently it was outwardly non-committal—must be rejected and put to death, and rise again.

Not by mere external obedience to His rule but by a mystical communication of His risen life, sacrificed for sin, the new kingdom was to live. The Death and Resurrection was to be the apocalypse which should resolve the confusion of the material and spiritual which beset the apocalypses which human poets had imagined.

It is not to be denied that the conduct of Christ was a direct challenge to the Judaism of the Pharisees and the Sadducean régime at Jerusalem. His conflict with the authorities begins to take form directly

after His acknowledged conviction that the Son of Man must be rejected and put to death. On the eve of His arrest it would seem certain that He could have escaped. It is certain then that He was prepared for and intent on death.

Some people have thought that He believed His death was to be the occasion for some supra-physical intervention by God the Father which would then and there 'end the age' and establish the kingdom victoriously to the confusion of His adversaries. Such a supposition is contrary to three-quarters of what He had taught about the nature of the kingdom; it is contrary to His character and certainly to His whole demeanour, as recorded, in the last hours of His life, and is founded on too naive an interpretation of apocalyptic. The only alternative is that He regarded His death as the necessary means to gain the kingdom or something which was essential for the kingdom's existence.

His intention was made clear by the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper on the very eve of His arrest and death. The description of this event is one of the most Messianic and apocalyptic passages of the whole Gospel, recorded by the three Synoptic books, and established in the tradition of the Church as, second only to the Cross itself, the most significant event in the whole earthly life of the Lord.

S. Luke specifically connects the occasion with the kingdom of God :

When the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer :

for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. . . . For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

S. Matthew varies these words, giving ‘until the day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.’

On this occasion Jesus took bread and wine as emblems of His own Body and Blood and performed with them the ritual act of dedicating Himself as a Sacrifice ‘for you and for many.’ ‘This is My Body which is given for you, . . . My Blood of the New Covenant,’ and He bade them partake of it.

Months before when His Messiahship was established in the faith of His followers He had said, ‘The Son of Man must suffer and be put to death.’ He had said that He came to give His life as a ransom for many. He now says that with desire He has desired to eat this passover on the eve of the coming of the kingdom of God, and He performs this act. It is the act which speaks, not the express words. The record of S. Luke, the comparative agreement in terms between the three Gospels and the record in the Epistle to the Corinthians, serve to elucidate the meaning. For this reason critics have hacked away at the text, but the bare record of the act is really sufficient by itself. Cut it down to a few words from S. Mark :

Taking bread and blessing, He brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take it. This is My Body. And taking a cup, and giving thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it.

This is the incident reduced to its lowest terms.

It is either too insignificant to be mentioned, or it is significant of all that the other words of the Gospel and Epistle add to it. It signifies that He was giving up His life (expressed in the sacrificial terms of body and blood) for the kingdom: and the giving it in the form of bread and wine, which they were required to eat and drink, showed that giving it 'for them' meant 'for them to receive.' His life sacrificed was to be theirs to live.

This act repeated became, from the days of the Resurrection, the characteristic solemnity of the Christian Church, and has remained so to this day. The narrative of the institution of the Eucharist does not stand alone in attesting to the doctrine of the identification of Christ with the community of His followers. It is scattered over the Epistles, which it must be remembered are the earliest of Christian documents, and it underlies the elementary conviction of the Pentecostal Church that salvation was 'in the Name of Jesus Christ.'

Apart from S. Paul's own mystical experiences expressed in such words as 'I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me,' and 'I am crucified with Christ,' which are personal, this identification with Christ's life is a commonplace of His conception of the Church.

'As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death.' Chapters vi to viii of the Epistle to the Romans are an elucidation of this text. To the Corinthians the Cross is the power and wisdom of God. 'Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemp-

tion.' And later, the bread which we break is the Communion of the Body of Christ, 'for we being many are one bread, one body, for we all are partakers of that one Bread.'

In the first book of the New Testament to be written S. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, whom 'God has appointed to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.' It cannot be too much emphasized that all this is not S. Paul's mysticism, that is, it is not experience suggesting truth. It is dogma, statement of truth which he is only anxious his converts may experience.¹ Nor is this doctrine peculiarly Pauline. S. Peter tells us that God has begotten us again into a living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It may not be a matter of proof texts, but throughout the Epistle the experiences of Christ are accounted to the Christian community. This was the enlightened understanding of the first Christians, the people who also published the Gospels.

Beyond this there is the testimony of the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles. It is not necessary to quote passages—the living water, the bread of life, the discourse and the prayer on the last night—because the communion of the life of Christ

¹ It is fatally easy now to read such texts as those quoted with pious acceptance but without real grasp of the doctrine involved. English needs a whole clause to bring out the value which S. Paul loads on to one preposition. Let the reader paraphrase the text 'Of Him are ye,' etc. He will begin with grammar, call in mysticism to help his understanding, and finish with a dogma, i.e. a truth of general and not merely individual application.

to the faithful is perhaps the main theme of the author.

It is usual to regard the Fourth Gospel as a reflection of a subsequent period on the life of Christ, and those who emphasize the apocalyptic character of the Synoptic records and the Kingdom motif are apt to describe the Fourth Gospel as a conscious 'spiritualizing' of the earlier teaching. It may be so, but its unreliability as giving a different aspect of the Master's life and teaching is not certain. The Synoptic Gospels are built up on two main documents. The Marcan narrative is supplemented by a document of teachings used with some additions by the first and third Gospels. Both documents are manifestly the exoteric teaching of Christ and the early Church. The *Logia* or Sayings document was mainly composed of parables and sermons delivered to the crowd. It is not on the face of it improbable that an aged disciple should think it well to supplement this before his death with his own version of the more esoteric doctrine of the Master Himself. In that case he threw it into narrative form, that being the approved form of teaching. It is a hypothesis and would leave the narrative elements open to considerable suspicion. But if the doctrine is regarded as the main purpose of the Gospel, its authenticity cannot be disallowed simply because its subject matter lies outside the scope of other records already extant.

But whatever may be thought of the verdict of the Epistles and S. John, the interpretation that Christ regarded His death on the Cross as the supreme act of inaugurating the kingdom of God,

and His life so sacrificed as the life of the kingdom which was to be, is the teaching in the first case of the Synoptic Gospels. When Christ approached the Passover and the Cross, it is clear that the kingdom was imminent. It was the last eating of bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine before the kingdom's coming. Now it was a question of days or hours. At the outset of the Gospel, that is, of the ministry, the time was drawing near. S. Mark's account of Christ's first message is, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.'

Between these two dates there are other indications of time. When the Seventy disciples are sent out on a mission the message entrusted to them to preach, twice repeated—once for those who will hear and again for those who refuse—is, 'The kingdom of God is come nigh you.' When they return with some measure of success Christ speaks to them privately as if the coming were already assured: 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see. . . . Many prophets and kings have desired to see these things and have not seen them' (*S. Luke* x. 23, 24).

S. Matthew records the sending out of the Twelve on a similar mission and with similar instructions. The chapter (*S. Matt.* x) shows signs of a conflation of Christ's teachings and warnings to the disciples. The first fifteen verses might well be an instruction before a particular tour during the ministry, and the rest of the chapter more general warnings concerning the reception which His disciples are likely to meet with in the world. In this latter part of the chapter come the words, 'You shall not finish off the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.'

As it stands this text seems to imply the coming of the kingdom before the preaching is complete.

The first verse of S. Mark, chapter ix, runs : ' I say unto you that there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.'

The passage is repeated in S. Matthew xvi. 28 : ' till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom,' and in S. Luke ix. 27 : ' till they see the kingdom of God.'

These little variations present a pretty critical problem. Did the later recensions of S. Matthew and S. Luke find the words, ' with power,' in S. Mark and omit them because their view was that the prediction was already fulfilled and the words, ' with power,' were just as well omitted ? Or were the words, ' with power,' added in a revised edition of S. Mark ? Or who can say that their addition or omission was not purely a whim of style and that it would not have occurred to the evangelists that they mattered one way or the other ? The question is, what did Christ mean ? The saying follows, in all these accounts, on the warning that any one who is ashamed of Christ and His words in this generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in glory.

Is the coming in the glory of the Father with His angels the same as the coming of the kingdom ? I should say that S. Matthew and S. Luke regarded the two comings as different, and if the Marcan story slightly favours the other interpretation it is yet possible that S. Matthew and S. Luke better understood the meaning of the original words.

But such an exegesis of an isolated passage is notoriously doubtful. Different critics have over and over again been positively convinced of contradictory conclusions. We do not really know that Christ said more than that people would see the kingdom of God in their lifetime, and that those who were ashamed of Him here would find Christ ashamed of them hereafter.

We must take one passage with another, and then we find that the kingdom which at first is at hand, at the end, i.e. at the time of the Passion, is imminent. We may expect a certain economy in Christ's public teaching on the subject, and a certain amount of conflation and even confusion in the records. The Gospels were not diaries, but were written years after by believers. It seems certain that at the time they wrote their attitude was either that the kingdom had come, or that an earnest of it had come but that there was a day of the Lord still to expect. Such a belief might tinge their recollection; but though we hear much of the unhistorical mind of the age, the Synoptic writers must receive credit for a degree of conscientiousness, considering how they might, if they had been otherwise minded, have written up their narratives to suit the circumstances of a later time.

That the absolute imminence of the kingdom and its achievement through His own actions then and there was involved in the words of Christ, and was the ruling principle of His ministry, is clear. It is the only reading that makes sense of the narrative.

But it is equally clear that Christ spoke of an end deferred at least over a considerable space of time.

'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.' At this point we are passing in the apocalyptic to what is strictly eschatological. The distinction has been too little observed. In their eschatological excitement critics have overlooked the fact that not all apocalyptic is a revelation of the ends.

In the literature the two are of course fused. As literature it was a matter of the imagination. It was a vision of wrongness to be righted, of judgement on sin, the overthrow of a world order, the establishment of a golden age. But Jesus Christ, as we can say both with reverence and assurance, was not an unoriginal Person. Attention to apocalyptic has turned a powerful light on the whole story of Christ. It has helped us to understand Him; for in these writings the shadowy ruler of the ancient prophets became a Christ of common expectation whose rôle Jesus could and did assume. But it is stultifying to suppose that the whole of Christ's purpose and achievement could be explained by Enoch and Solomon, or by the sum-total of their ideas. His own original apocalypse added something which could not be found in theirs. It was not pseudonymously written; it was performed; and not in a passion play, but by deeds and a death. He lived not in the world of dreams but of deeds, not of literature but of action. He shared the spirit of the poets who looked for a new order, but He was not committed to their scheme, which indeed was inconsistent enough with itself. He referred immediately to the Father's will.

So the coming of the kingdom was true apocalyptic

in action, and there remained in the future a consummation and a judgement fitly imaged in apocalyptic and eschatological language of clouds of glory and throngs of angels and sounding of trumpets. S. Paul interprets it to the Corinthians (I. xv. 24, 25): 'Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.'

The kingdom and the reigning is one order: the delivering up the kingdom to God is yet a far-off divine event.

There is yet another feature of the eschatological sections of Christ's discourses. S. Mark xiii, S. Matthew xxiv, and S. Luke xxi all begin with the drawing of Christ's attention to the goodly stones of Jerusalem's temple. There follows the vivid prediction of the disaster of Judaism, the claims of false Christs, and in each case the chapter breaks off into a warning of the last days and certainty of judgement to come, and the lesson to watch faithfully.

The only difficulty in this passage of scripture lies in the words 'Immediately after the tribulation in those days' (*S. Matt.* xxiv. 29), which mark a break from the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem to the section about judgement. If the narrative was composed before the fulfilment of the prophecy in A.D. 70 the conflation is easy to understand.

But even if the linking words form part of the original words of Christ and the whole chapter represents a specific conversation (which is really quite unlikely), there would not be much difficulty

in supposing that He had used the overthrow of the nation and the razing of the Temple of Jehovah and the attendant catastrophes which He foresaw, as a parable of the spiritual or cosmic disasters of unfaithfulness and rejection of His kingdom. It would be quite in accord with the usage of apocalyptic language.

Finally, there is something to be said about this language and its interpretation. As a matter of fact the habits of speech of Syrian peoples in general are a difficulty to Europeans, and perhaps more to those of German and English stock than to those who live on the Mediterranean. Their methods of emphasis, though undoubtedly striking, lack the precision which is expected by the Teuton and Anglo-Saxon when he is conducting an inquiry.

There is an interesting book, *The Syrian Christ*,¹ written by an author with topical knowledge and racial affinity with the present inhabitants of the Holy Land. He explains many local customs which throw a light on the narratives of both the Old and New Testaments, and has much to say, not without humour, about this difference in habits of speech between those who lived the Bible scenes and those who now criticize the documents.

In apocalyptic literature the divergence is heightened because it is not only Oriental but also poetic. It developed a special set of notions and a vocabulary of its own, as vehicles of ideas which were not easy of expression. Angels served many purposes, as a remembrance of the names of the various orders of angels indicate—thrones, principalities, powers.

¹ By A. M. Rihbany.

The sun and the moon and the stars are involved in cataclysms, and the rest of the forces of nature respond. Trumpets and swords and trails of glory add their art to songs of triumph and the wailing and gnashing of teeth.

We admit it all in art, and they admit it in speech. What exactly did S. Paul mean when he says indicatively and emphatically, 'For the trumpet shall sound'? It would be as dull to ask him such a question as to ask Michael Angelo what exactly he meant by the central Figure on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel. All the artists from Orcagna to Tintoretto and beyond who painted Paradises were neither cynics illustrating a fairy tale, nor fools faking a *Pathé Gazette* of the future world. Symbols, whether of speech or drawing, express something which is missed by pedants who keep within the dull limits of sense experience; and we do ascribe a power for truth to poets and artists which we feel to be beyond the powers of mere historians and scientists.

The ease with which imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown finds a parallel in the ease with which actual events are interpreted as the fulfilment of very imaginatively pictured prophecies.

According to S. Luke, whatever did happen on the Day of Pentecost could be described by some onlookers in the words, 'These men are full of new wine.' But S. Peter calmly asserts that it is the fulfilment of a prophecy of Joel which he quotes: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your

young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . . . And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath ; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. . . .’ He actually says it is too early to be drunk, which is prosaic enough, and that his hearers have witnessed the fulfilment of this prophecy, ‘He hath shed forth this [the Spirit] which ye now see and hear.’

It comes to this, that those who take the view that Christ borrowed the ideas and language of His day (which I regard as proved) must also be prepared to take those ideas and language as those who lived in eschatological circles took them, which was not *au pied de la lettre*. If it is dull witted to regard Christ as a moral teacher of the nineteenth-century reformed type, it is also not very bright to take every apocalyptic word at its English or German face value.

In the court of the high priest Christ answered nothing to the charges brought against Him till He was adjured by the high priest, ‘Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed ?’ Then Jesus said, ‘I am ; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.’ It was the answer that the Jew would understand. To the Roman Pilate asking, ‘Art Thou the King of the Jews ?’ Jesus answered, ‘Thou sayest it,’ and S. John adds, ‘I came to bear witness to the truth.’

CHAPTER IV

THE ATONING SACRIFICE

THE Atonement has generally been approached from the standing-point of reason. S. Anselm expressly treated the subject in this way. The transaction effected by the Cross was a matter of speculation to the Fathers, and it is not otherwise in modern treatises which work over the theories or hints supplied by the Doctors of the Church. Moral considerations (debt, justice, etc.) are invoked to give a rationale to the fact of the death; and in the case of the subjective theories, effects—incidental effects—are used to supply a purpose. Scripture seems regarded as supplying only an inchoate doctrine, or is called in to supply proofs to a doctrine speculatively conceived.

This is not true of M. Rivière's Historical Essay. I venture to think that he understates the case when he says, ' [Christ's] words contain no theory.' He considers that S. Paul penetrated more deeply into the Master's thought than the Gospel makes explicit, but that it is untrue that he substituted his own thought for that of Christ. I quote the last words of his chapter on the Gospel data :

Jesus was the first to connect our salvation with His own death, and He willed to give His life for us and our sins. In

this lies the whole mystery of the Atonement, and whatever efforts Christian thinkers may make to fathom its meaning, they will never exhaust the sublime though simple reality expressed by the Gospel.

But though isolated texts, like 'The Son of Man came to give His life as a ransom for many,' do not contain a theory, I believe that the Gospels as we now understand them do show us the purpose of Christ in His ministry and His purpose in going to His death. His words contain no theory, but indeed if there were words of His recorded which did state a theory, they would almost certainly be impugned by critics. It is His conduct and actions which make clear His purpose, and these cannot be seriously impugned because they constitute a tale obviously not written to support a thesis.

That purpose does constitute a theory of the Atonement. S. Paul and other canonical writers will help us to attest that theory. The speculations of the Greek Fathers, and above all the treatise of S. Anselm, will help us to see how the theory holds good in relation to abstract problems of human life and thought. The very difficulties of our own problems of modern life will bear out the truth of any theory of the Atonement worthy of the name. But it is to Christ's purpose expressed in His words and acts that we must go for the theory. Any other source is too insecure.

And first of all He *had* the purpose. Christ went willingly to His death. He purposely used the enmity excited against Him at Jerusalem to bring about a deeper necessity of His mission.

Some critics have denied that this is found in the

Synoptic Gospels. It is explicitly stated in the Fourth Gospel, but it is clear enough from the story in the other three, and may be regarded as all the more certain because it is not stated in so many words by the writers who themselves certainly believed it at the time they wrote. He foretold His death in the words, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again' (*S. Mark* viii. 31), and He reproached His chief disciple as a tempter because the latter rebuked Him for the saying. Again, *S. Mark* records (ix. 31) that He taught His disciples of His approaching Death and Resurrection, but they 'understood not the saying.'

He speaks (x. 38) of the cup which He should drink of. He went up to Jerusalem and the disciples 'were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid,' and again comes the clear explanation of what they were about: 'We go up to Jerusalem: and the Son of Man shall be delivered.' He arranged a quite provocative entry into Jerusalem, and on His arrival acted with violence in the Temple courts. He suggested in a parable spoken to His enemies their crime and His own murder. He speaks of the woman at Bethany anointing His Body to the burying. The words at the Last Supper consecrate His Body and Blood as a Sacrifice. In the hour of betrayal He speaks again in prayer of 'the cup,' and prays the Father, 'Thy will be done.' The only two words He spoke at His trial, according to *S. Mark*, are a challenge to the high priest and an admission to the Roman judge. If the Marcan

narrative is to stand at all, there really cannot be any doubt on this matter of fact, that Christ accepted an over-ruling purpose in the opposition and crime of His enemies.

He saw it in the first place as the will of God His Father. His rebuke to S. Peter was couched in the words, 'Thou savourest not the things that be of God.' In the Garden He prays, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.' On the Cross and in the hour of death He cries out the opening words of the twenty-second Psalm. Like the prayer in the Garden, the Psalm begins with words of intense human suffering, and passes on to an expression of supreme faith. His sufferings and death were then to the mind of Christ the will of God the Father.

But even the will of God is conveyed to the mind in some reasonable form as an intelligible purpose. We are bound to suppose that Christ saw His approaching death as the will of God because He saw its necessity for the purpose for which God had sent Him. The question is, what was the death to effect, and how?

Salvation from sin naturally comes to our mind. Do the Gospels suggest this? S. Matthew does say that His Name was to be called Jesus, 'for He shall save His people from their sins'; but the truth is that the purpose of salvation from sin, that is, the negative dealing with sin, is not prominent in the Synoptic record of the ministry and death of Christ. In S. John's Gospel we find the need of conversion emphasized, and the discourses dwell on the fact

and sense of sin. In the closing scene the washing of the disciples' feet, besides the lesson in humble service which Christ expounds, appears from the incident as it affected S. Peter to symbolize the need of cleansing.

In all the Gospels, and clearly in the mission of Christ as it was, there is a continual insistence on the sense of sin. Moreover, sin is very sternly rebuked, and on the other hand it is freely forgiven.

The healing of the paralytic shows Christ's teaching that it is more important to get sin forgiven than sickness healed, at least so the incident is generally explained; but it does suggest the ease rather than the difficulty of forgiveness. The penitent woman in the Pharisee's house is freely assured of forgiveness. The parable of the Prodigal Son is a favourite with those who wish to prove that there is no need of an atonement. The prodigal is very freely forgiven on his repentance. Zacchaeus and other publicans and sinners are welcomed and treated as reconciled or reconcilable in distinction to virtuous keepers of the Law. The Apostles are given authority to absolve. Though the proof text of this comes in S. John and after the Resurrection, the fact could hardly be questioned.

And yet the whole effect of the work of Christ could be summed up in the words with which S. Luke ends his Gospel—'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' It was not only a summary in words, which might be questioned as Pauline or what not, it was what actually happened. Was this a breakaway from

the whole spirit of the Founder's work on the very morrow of His departure ?

The explanation is that Christ thought of sin and deliverance in relation to the kingdom of God. The kingdom was the redemption, and the life of the kingdom the new life. From the time of the prophets of Israel the thought of the Christ and His kingdom had deepened into a doctrine of deliverance from sin. The Babylonian captivity and the prophecy of the Servant had strengthened the sense of need. The apocalyptic visions had departed more and more from mundane triumphs to supernatural regeneration :

Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready
His ways ;

To give knowledge of salvation unto His people
In the remission of their sins,

Because of the tender mercy of our God,

Whereby the Dayspring from on high shall visit us.

The mission of Christ dated from S. John Baptist's preaching of the coming of the kingdom and of repentance as the preparation for it. The kingdom which Christ came to inaugurate was a new association of man with God and therefore in itself involved a reconciliation. So the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins ; the publican and harlot were more able because of their faith and love to enter into the kingdom of God than the formally righteous person who knew no need of it. The prodigal son not only repented but went back to the father's house, saying, ' Make me as one of thy hired servants.'

The kingdom of God was a new covenant to

succeed the old covenant. If we remember that we are dealing with Jewish modes of thought, it is not a far-fetched idea that Christ should have foreseen that the new covenant could only be sealed with blood. It was Christ Who suggested this idea to the writer to the Hebrews.

‘This is My Blood of the new covenant.’ With a slight variation the words are quoted in the three Gospels and in the first Corinthian Epistle. If by a *tour de force* of literary criticism the reference to the new covenant is traced to S. Paul, there remains Christ’s description of Himself, or His life, as Body and Blood, words of necessary sacrificial import. It certainly would appear that Christ associated His death with the Passover solemnity which was the memorial of how the blood of the lamb had sealed the first covenant of the redemption of the People of Israel.

In the days of His ministry when He found the listeners responsive enough to His message so long as He worked miracles, but even so such that He often had to marvel at their unbelief, without ears to hear and slow of understanding; when His Apostles also were without understanding; when all the more privileged persons of the nation were on their guard or openly opposed to Him, how was the kingdom of God to come?

By the action of God? But what was His own part? He was not a John Baptist, a mere forerunner. Some tremendous action on His part was to be taken. The Son of Man must Himself be the sacrifice of the new covenant, and the third day He should rise again.

There were prophecies in plenty to suggest it—the Suffering Servant, the shepherd cut off. Psalm xl actually compared such an action with sacrifices and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings.

We can be certain that Christ meditated on the Psalms and prophecies and applied them to Himself. We know that He regarded Himself as the final instrument, or rather as the destined person of the apocalypse. And so He determined on Himself as the Sacrifice.

The worship of the Jews was built on sacrifice. Many times probably in His childhood and youth He had set off in a large party for the keeping of a feast at Jerusalem, where, as a later disciple testified, almost all things were purified with blood. In His ministry He still goes to the feast. Though there are many denunciations of the Scribes and Pharisees over the keeping of the Law, the adding of ordinances of men, rigour in Sabbath-keeping, formalism in cleansings, hypocritical pride in praying, there is no criticism of the Temple worship, nothing about the uselessness of bloody sacrifices or daily offerings of incense. The only hint of possible reference to the Temple worship is whatever lay behind the charge mentioned by S. Matthew at the trial, that He had said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ It is more than probable that His words had foreshadowed the passing from the old to the new covenant for which He was to be the necessary sacrifice.

A sacrifice is offered to God. There were not wanting correctives to the notion that God is pleased with offerings and deaths in themselves. ‘I hate

and despise your solemn feast days.' 'Thinkest thou that I will eat bull's flesh and drink the blood of goats?' 'Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee, but Thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.' The writers of these words, and many like them, were probably assiduous worshippers themselves at the Temple feasts. The notion of God's due, God's honour, had to be maintained. Sin was felt, debt was acknowledged, and sacrifice was the Godward way of discharging both. There was profound truth in all this, which human nature has always perceived in some form or other.

Christ, Who wanted to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, Who was brought up on Jewish rites, Who was so critical of forms and ceremonies elsewhere, would surely perceive the truth that underlay the sacrificial system, and yet see that the make-believe of the Old Testament must pass away to give place to a real sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats might suffice for the ceremonial cleansing of the flesh: the Blood of Himself, the Christ, should set free the inheritors of the new covenant from conscience about cleansings to the new service of the living God. The life of the slain animal ascending in the flame was a figure of the worshipper's obedience; His own life sacrificed to God should become the eternal life of God's kingdom.

If I have used the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews to express the purpose of Christ, I must disclaim using the thought of a later disciple in the stead of that of the Master. After all, the language is common to the Psalms and prophets.

To recapitulate what we learn from the Gospels

only, that is, from the picture there presented of Christ and His mission—Christ viewed His death as fulfilling a purpose. He conceived it as the will of God, His Father; as necessary for the winning into existence of the kingdom of God; as a sacrifice, like in kind to the sacrifices of His nation and the Temple, but fulfilling in truth what they only figured, the Sacrifice of the new covenant.

Christ's recorded words certainly help us to this interpretation of His mind; but they are corroborated if not suggested by the whole tenor of His mission, and by being in tune with the ideas of the time and Jewish religion. Yet this by no means detracts from the originality, the inspiration, the divine intuition of His character. What more is needed, in order that Christ's own presentation of His death should 'contain a theory' is to be found in what is necessarily implied by the thought of sacrifice.

At first, in stating a doctrine of the Atonement in terms of Jewish sacrifices, it seems that we are harking back to very primitive and crude ideas of the nature of God. The blood of the lamb sprinkled on lintel and sideposts of the doors at the Passover, the elaborate ceremony of Azazel and the slain goat on the Day of Atonement, the ordinances of the Temple court where the altar of burnt-offering stood, such rites seem legendary and make-believe and unworthy to supply an explanation for the Cross of the Saviour of Mankind and for the central belief and worship of civilized Christians. It is true that we could not be content with a statement of the deep things of Christianity expressed as a continu-

ance of Levitical rites. The language and the ideas are foreign to us. But they were not foreign to Christ when He met His death and designed the salvation of man, nor to His Apostles and the first hearers of the new faith.

Now there may or may not have been a time when ritual sacrifices were not symbolical. There may have been tribes who really thought the god needed and consumed the offerings of meal and the blood of beasts. That is purely a question for anthropologists. It is irrelevant when we are considering the religion of Jerusalem or Athens in A.D. 33. But it is relevant to point out the very peculiar heaviness of our own age in the matter of symbolic expression. In art appreciation the work of Old Masters and certain developments of modern art (strangely called modernist) are very coldly praised, and that on grounds of beauty of line, colour, composition, mass, etc., rarely for what they express. The popular and, I think, the artistic gaze is turned to landscape, *genre*, and conversation pieces, portraits, humour, and mere technique. Our religious differences also are often due to the same stickiness which prevents people from appreciating what is symbolic and understanding that there are truths which can only be expressed by means of symbols. Fundamentalists and Modernists are alike victims of this mechanization of the mind. Be that as it may, the worship of the God of Israel was symbolical in the Temple courts, as were the rites to which Socrates gave his consent; and the meaning of all sacrifice is that *something is due to God*.

Worship, including recognition and honour, were

due. Gifts are the symbolical tokens of honour; and the highest gift was life, the life of the worshipper which could be symbolized by the life of the victim. To fine it still further, the blood was the symbol of its life.

Besides honour, though intimately connected with it, something else was due from man to God, because of sin—reparation. It is said that the primitive idea of sin was defilement, and this only involves a further symbolical idea. We know what Christ thought of the multiplied ordinances of ceremonial cleansing, and that only emphasized His teaching of the real and spiritual defilement of the sin that cometh out of the heart of man. For defilements sacrifices were often prescribed. A sacrifice was an act of reparation. It was to put man right with God; to secure reconciliation and forgiveness; it was to make up for the sins.

What needs to be emphasized is not that the sacrifices did put things right, but that the need was felt that something was owed to God in order to put things right, and that sacrifices were a symbolical way of supplying it.

It is not surprising that the inadequacy was sometimes borne in on them. One of the most perfect outpourings of penitence in literature is the fifty-first Psalm: 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness'; the penitent feels the uncleanness of his sin, he recognizes that it is against God he has transgressed, and judgement against him will be only just. So he prays to be purged, he prays for a clean heart and a right spirit. He promises amendment and service. Sacrifices are useless.

‘Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.’

Yet perceiving this uselessness of burnt-offerings, he also sees that something must be added to his penitence. He beseeches God not only to pardon but to renew him with a free or willing spirit that he may teach transgressors God’s ways and be the means of converting sinners, and that his mouth may show forth God’s praise.

Though sacrifices will not suffice, he still feels that something must be done to increase God’s honour as the result of his sin. This conviction that somehow sin itself must be turned to account to redound to God’s honour seems to be wellnigh universal to religion; and even when religion is not in question the same thought that an atonement is needed beyond the repentance of the offender has occupied the mind of men when faced with the problem of human relations.

If reparation, then, was in the mind of Christ regarding His death, it was because reparation was inherent in the thought of many sacrifices.

Every view of the Cross, all theories of Atonement, include the notion that Christ fought against and conquered sin. His own parabolic teaching of casting out Beelzebub and binding the strong man, as well as the strain and stress of the Passion, show that this was the idea also of Christ. But what is meant by fighting against and conquering sin? Not just not sinning, not even perfect obedience. That is a personal victory, but it is not binding the strong man and spoiling his goods. The conquest of sin must include the turning of sin to sin’s own confusion

and the glory of God, and, briefly, stopping sin. And the means of this, as our Lord's words and actions declare, was the kingdom of God. Therefore He suffered rejection, cruelty, and death that His life sacrificed might become the life of the kingdom. He does not mention His death without mentioning also His Resurrection. Through the sacrifice of His life, with all the implications that attend on sacrifice, His life was offered to God, and was to rise again, not only to a resurrection confirming the faith of the disciples, but to a resurrection of an eternal life, the life of the kingdom of God, a life of which the faithful would partake.

This is the Gospel theory of the Atonement: that the kingdom of God is reconciliation with God, an organizing of the human family against sin and to do God's service; that the secret of the kingdom of God is the continuation of Christ's life in it; that Christ's life is given to it by sacrifice; that the Sacrifice of the Cross on its godward side was an offering of obedient and perfect humanity, on its human side the result of the sin present in the world.

It depends ultimately on the content of Christ's belief in His own Christhood, a content amounting to divinity.

If Gospel theory means that we are to derive a doctrine from three documents, as lawyers seek to derive law from given Acts of Parliament, one would admit that this doctrine is not proven; but the Gospels are not legal documents. Christians must read them to make sense of the life of Christ with the aid of the Spirit of Christ, and practical reason

gives us this interpretation of His words and acts recorded in the Gospels.

It remained for the writer to the Hebrews to develop the idea of the High Priesthood of Christ. In Christ's own suggestions the thought of Himself as the Victim is dominant. In the last chapter we called attention to the originality of Christ in dealing with apocalypse. Here, too, we must see that Christ did not merely borrow an idea from the symbolic ritual of the Temple. He seized the truth that underlay that ritual. His priesthood was inherent in His character as the Christ of God and the Son of Man, and by an act of supreme love to God and to man He sacrificed His life to be the life of a redeemed people. Such a new priesthood, such a new sacrifice was this, that henceforth no priesthood or sacrifice can be valued except by reference to His act, which was the act of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

CHAPTER V

ATONEMENT, REASON, AND CATHOLICISM

IN this chapter we leave the Gospels in order to consider the Atonement in relation to human thought, and later the actual effect of the Crucifixion on the organization of human life.

There are two main types of Atonement doctrine. The first teaches that Christ by His crucifixion did something *for* man. The Cross accomplishes something apart from any change in man's disposition. That does not mean that the change in disposition, i.e. repentance, is not eventually necessary on the part of man, but that the Atonement is a transaction which is prior to repentance and makes forgiveness available.

Stated crudely, the Atonement makes the change on God's side ; not of course changing the will or the benevolence of the immutable God. That would be a heresy which no Christian has seriously held. What is effected by the Cross is something which makes it possible for God to forgive the sinner ; but reconciliation in the full sense is something more than forgiveness. This type is called objective, because it implies a change in the condition of things, not a change merely in man's attitude.

The second type is called subjective. According

to this, God is loving and merciful and wants to forgive the sinner. All that is necessary is that the sinner should repent. Therefore the Cross does something *to* man. It brings him to repentance. It is a manifestation of the love of God, a suffering with man, and so an appeal to man. The love of the wronged one is calculated more than anything else to move the wrongdoer to a sense of guilt, and so to repentance. This doctrine makes the change on man's side.

The classification of objective and subjective should be accepted with reserve. Exponents of the second type can always plead that the Crucifixion was an objective fact, and subjectivism does not enter the case until that is accomplished. In fact, that is just what many preachers are saying who think they are objectivists. On the other hand, those who insist on the objective doctrine would all teach the necessity of human penitence in order to obtain forgiveness, and they would not be at pains to deny that the story or vision of the Cross may excite it. They would agree with enthusiasm with all the positive statements of the subjective teaching. What they would say is that producing individual penitence is not what is meant by the idea of atonement, and that mankind is conscious of a deeper need than its own repentance, that repentance is not enough. The upholders of the subjective theory, however, deny any need beyond repentance, and are accustomed to suggest that any doctrines which imply a further need are immoral.

The theory set forth in the last chapter, as the Gospel theory, is the most objective of all, because

it does not proceed even from the demands of man's sense of rightness, though incidentally it may satisfy them. It formulates a theory based on certain events, and it depends for its validity on whether the purpose ascribed to Christ has come true in history. It was remarked, moreover, in reference to Psalm li, that the conviction that repentance is not enough is common to religion and also to secular thought.

In *Atonement in Literature and Life*, Mr. C. A. Dinsmore shows how the problem of reconciliation has exercised the greatest minds in all ages. It is not so much fate which is the theme of the great trilogies of Aeschylus and Sophocles; it is the terrible difficulty of getting rid of a sin. Sin must be penalized. The fates stronger than the Olympian gods see to that. This is the dramatic way of stating that the penalty of sin is not by the arbitrary exercise of the god's anger but involved in the very facts of life.

Agamemnon's act in slaying his daughter, Iphigenia, though the sacrifice was required by the gods, was a sin against the family, which is only blotted out ten years later by his wife's crime in killing him. Orestes, his son, does right in executing vengeance for his father's death on Clytemnestra his mother, and then the matricide in turn is pursued by the avenging Furies. Justice is at last satisfied by the formal acquittal of Orestes by a jury of Athenian citizens and the placating of the Furies, who are henceforth to be called the 'Kindly ones.'

Dante with freedom treats the same problem with the help of scholastic methods. Shakespeare in his last romantic comedies, *The Tempest* and *The Winter's*

Tale, deals with it by making good come out of evil. Prospero has more than human powers, and is able to shape events to a happy end. The plots of *Adam Bede* and the *Scarlet Letter* depend on the conviction that something more than repentance is required. From 'Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles,' the first words of classical literature, to the American nineteenth-century novelist sin constitutes a problem. Mr. Dinsmore insists that sin is felt to be of social incidence. An individual penitence will not blot it out. Sin somehow must be turned to good account. (I write from memory and hope I have not misrepresented the author.)

Professor Royce, writing entirely unconventional theology, teaches the same. He leaves God out. But there is a beloved community against which all sin is treachery; and atonement can only come about when the very treachery can be turned to bring the community to a higher and better life than it would have enjoyed had the sin never occurred. I have always thought that Professor Royce must have been an American Joseph of Arimathaea. He certainly looked for the kingdom of God, but appears to have held the faith secretly for fear of the philosophers.

The problem of reconciliation for sin is thus no figment of Christianity, no false fear exploited by priests. Neither Sophocles nor George Eliot had theological bees in their bonnets. It is a problem, perhaps the great problem of human life.

But the great exponent of the doctrine that there is a debt due from man to God because of sin is S. Anselm. He was an Italian who became a monk, and Abbot of Bec, a Benedictine monastery in Nor-

mandy, and Archbishop of Canterbury in the reigns of William Rufus and Henry I. He wrote a little book which he called, *Cur Deus Homo*, 'Why God became Man,' beginning it in England, and finishing it in 1098 at Benevento 'while a wanderer in the Capuan province.' In its English translation the book contains only a hundred small pages; and even so there are considerable passages in it which nowadays would be thought irrelevant, about the number of the fallen angels and the necessity of filling up the depleted ranks of angels by redeemed men. It is in the form of a dialogue between Anselm and Boso. The latter asks questions and further enlightenment, and explains his own difficulties. It will be gathered that the statement of the doctrine itself is fairly concise.

All modern works on the Atonement, except those which take a purely subjective view, depend very largely on S. Anselm, but he is generally criticized as taking too forensic a view of the transaction of the Cross. It was certainly S. Anselm's intention to state the case coldly and logically. He set out to prove to unbelievers by logical arguments that it is impossible for any man to be saved without Christ. 'In like manner it is shown no less plainly by reason and truth (as though nothing were known of Christ) that human nature was made for a blessed immortality; that man must come to what he is made for; and that this could only be done by one who is man and God.' This explanation of the scope of his book is contained in a short passage which S. Anselm requests that every transcriber of his book shall include.

Put as briefly as possible, S. Anselm's doctrine is that sin is an infringement of the honour of God; that God cannot rightly allow His honour to be profaned; that therefore satisfaction must be made. The satisfaction must be made by man because it is man who has sinned. As all men have sinned, the satisfaction to be adequate must be something more than everything which is not God. Only God can make such an offering; therefore the maker of satisfaction must be also God. And therefore God became man.

These bald propositions do not do justice to S. Anselm's doctrine. With all its logic it is sensitively expressed; and Boso, the interlocutor, puts difficulties and expresses sentiments very much as a pious undergraduate of our own time might voice them. For instance, in a particularly crisp chapter S. Anselm explains why God cannot allow His honour to be profaned. It is not because he regards God as a ruler standing upon His dignity. It is because God is Justice and Goodness itself, and it is in the nature of things intolerable that justice and goodness should be impaired. Again, when he speaks of Christ as offering satisfaction to God (the line of argument which is blamed as forensic) he explains that it is simplest to phrase it thus, though really in the nature of the Blessed Trinity it is God Who is making the satisfaction to Himself.

The satisfaction is not the inflicting of punishment. The theory that God accepted the unmerited punishment of Christ as the due reward of men's sins is not the doctrine of *Cur Deus Homo*. It was not, according to S. Anselm, the bearing of punishment

at all that made atonement ; it was the positive offering of something of infinite value, namely the life of Christ Who was perfect Man and perfect God.

That Christ did bear the penalty of human sin, that, in that sense, the guiltless was a substitute for the guilty, no theological doctrine could avoid, simply because it was so as a matter of fact. That it was a unique substitution, different in degree from the sufferings or death that any other man could endure for the faults of others, is also true because Christ was sinless. But that is quite another thing from saying that the Atonement lies in the exaction of a penalty.

Though reference to Christ's bearing of the punishment of human sin is inevitable, both because it is an obvious fact and because the thought has devotional, ultimately subjective, value to the sinner, the theory that the satisfaction offered to God consisted in the vicarious punishment of the innocent was the work of so-called orthodox Protestants¹ of a later age. It was the negative satisfaction of punishing sin, instead of the positive satisfaction of merit, which they could understand.

S. Anselm's conclusion was that Christ, working on behalf of man, offered to God, Whose honour was profaned by human sin, a gift of supreme value which God, being true to His nature of justice and goodness, was bound to recompense. As Christ, being God, could not be recompensed, the reward was assigned to man whom Christ had come to save, and so man in the Church and in the life of grace became the heir of salvation.

¹ But well supported by some Catholic preachers.

His final chapter, a single paragraph, dwells on the greatness and the justice of the mercy of God. What could be more merciful than to call us into the Christian faith where this salvation could be enjoyed; what more just than, having received the great payment, to remit the whole debt? That God should be both merciful and just is the essence of the doctrine. Underlying it is the doctrine of merit; and though merit as applied to other human lives may arouse suspicion (a subject there is no need to discuss here) the merit of the Redeemer of mankind is beyond contradiction, and, to use S. Anselm's terms, it availed to allow man's entry into the Christian faith and salvation.

Later theologians softened S. Anselm's expression. His Christ was not very human and his God not quite divine. More modern writers have softened it so much, with elaborate and often recondite analogies from human relationships and with such obvious desire to make the doctrine unexceptionably moral, that it is often difficult to see the wood for the trees.

What the doctrine of the Atonement is to show is what did Christ's death effect to gain a universal salvation for all who would accept it. When we start explaining it as a manifestation of this or that we at once enter the area of exhortation, edification, appeal, and winningness which would appear to be the only interest of much modern religion.

If the problem of the clash between justice and mercy is real, as not only the Christian religion but general human thought testify, let us find and state what Christ did to solve it. But if Christ did nothing

but bear a witness on the Cross, the only thing for Him to bear witness to is that after all there is no problem. It is no more than the scene among the lilies in the *Blue Bird* when some innocent exclaims, 'There is no death.'

I am in danger of over depreciating the subjective doctrine. The root of the problem is sin; and the greatest of all needs is that man should be brought to repentance; and the Cross does bring to repentance; and all these manifestation doctrines do help to show why. But there are two reasons why these doctrines are inadequate.

The first is that the power of the Cross to bring man to repentance paradoxically depends on man believing in it for a further and higher reason. Otherwise the Cross of Christ is only a large scale S. Sebastian. A martyrdom is impressive, but it is not world-saving. It is because we believe the Cross to be in a superior sense the means of salvation that the cost of the salvation makes us repent.

Secondly, repentance and even forgiveness is not the end. What is to be done with the penitent? is surely a question that not only human society but man's Creator must ask. The whole achievement that the subjective doctrines can ascribe to the Cross is only after all a step in the right direction. It is an individual conversion: it is not the Atonement for human sin.

S. Anselm's doctrine is perfectly clear. He taught that Christ won salvation for all who would accept it in the Christian faith (Book i. xx).

It is probable that the quandary in which moderns find themselves about the whole problem of evil is

due to the fact that they look for its solution apart from the Christian religion, and that means the Christian Church. They quote Omar Khayyám and call upon Christianity to give the answer, but Christianity has proclaimed no answer apart from itself. There is no other answer. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Without the Church there is pessimism or the uncovenanted mercies of God, and uncovenanted is a religious word meaning lying outside the sphere of what we know. But with the Church there is no pessimism. So the Atonement must ultimately rest on what Christ has done to make the Church.

The weakest spot in S. Anselm's account of the Atonement is making the achievement of Christ a gift of God which God had to recompense, and did so by assigning salvation to Christians. S. Anselm could defend his statement. The whole purpose of the book, as well as its title, insist that God had to become man in order to pay the debt. Man sins, and so man must pay and man is regarded as collectively responsible. Catholic ethics are necessarily socialist rather than individualist. Man collectively in the Christian faith, that is, for S. Anselm, in the Catholic Church, is credited through Christ with the payment of the debt. And though salvation is envisaged as the reward of merit, it is at the same time the gift of mercy, and S. Anselm tells us that it is only for convenience of logical statement that the Father and the Son are regarded as two parties to the transaction. Nevertheless, it would have been better if at the end of his argument he had spoken of Christ's offering, not as a gift which God must reward, but as a gift whose merit is that God can

use it for the purpose desired by His mercy and love, the salvation of man.

S. Anselm makes Almighty God hand out salvation in the form of the Christian covenant as if it were a reward for some other gift received. But the gift received had not only the abstract merit that 'it surpassed all that is below God' (Book ii. vi) but it was itself the saved life available for all who would accept it by incorporation into it. It was, to speak after the manner of men, the use that could be made of it, not the store which was set upon it, that gave the Sacrifice of Christ its value.

Now we have seen that the root principle of S. Anselm's, or any other real doctrine of the Atonement, is the principle that underlay the practice of sacrifice in the Hebrew Temple religion. There is every reason to believe that Christ meant His death as a sacrifice, and its necessity would be the same cause that made sacrifices necessary. But Christ did not even speak of His Sacrifice as something which His heavenly Father would repay. What He did imply by His actions was that His death was a sacrifice which His Father would accept in perfecting the plan for which He was sent, and this is more consonant with His Messianic character. He died for the kingdom of God, and His death was to give it a life it could not otherwise gain.

How can the life of Christ be the life of the kingdom? The life of Christ was perfect. The sinlessness of Christ is not a fact for which we can look for proof. Such things are in the nature of the case incapable of proof. There is no trace in all the recorded words of Christ that He had the

least consciousness of sin. John Baptist's testimony is quoted by later disciples, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee,' and the answer of Christ was, 'Suffer it now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' S. John makes Christ declare His sinlessness to the Jews. S. Peter tells converts that they were redeemed 'with precious Blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the Blood of Christ' (1 *S. Pet.* i. 19); and again he speaks of Christ 'Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth' (*ibid.*, ii. 22). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that He offered Himself without spot to God.

There is no need to labour the point. Christian faith has always believed in the sinlessness of Christ. There have been Biblical critics who have professed to find imperfections in the moral attitude of Christ. They quote the incident of the barren fig tree, or the Gadarene swine, or the tone of the discourses to the Jews in the Fourth Gospel. Such critics do not on other occasions take scriptural records so literally. But imperfection can only be found by first denying that He was what He said He was, and was teaching men to believe about Him. For the most part even those who do not accept the unique claim and authority of Christ or believe in Him as God, find in Him the stainless and perfect character which can be the example to all living.

But the perfection of Christ's character does not consist only in the absence of actual sin. A negative goodness is unique in human history, but Christ's goodness was positive too. His one and only purpose was to do the will of God, and that will for

Him was nothing else than the divine work of the salvation of the whole of the human race. That, we believe and have all the evidence that is possible for knowing, was the inmost purpose that possessed His mind and desires and occupied His every action from the dawning of consciousness to the commending of His Spirit to the Father on the Cross. There have been some who have seen in this perfection of Christ's life the essential fact of His Sacrifice. Never yet had the creature lived the life meant for him by the Creator. The life of Christ was a new creation, the one and only perfect human life.

The perfection of the human life of Christ was a necessary element in the Atonement. It was logically demanded in S. Anselm's doctrine that Christ's death should be unmerited by sin. We now come to the mystery that the life of Christ was something other and more than the life of a man. Theology is bound to say that the life which Christ surrendered on the Cross was a human life. God cannot die. But Christ Who laid down His human life was more than man. S. Paul, in an elusive text which fascinates the searcher for a formula, says that, 'born of the seed of David according to the flesh, He was declared to be the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead' (*Rom.* i. 3, 4). The human life laid down in its complete perfection on the Cross was re-united in the Resurrection with the life of God, and 'though He be God and Man yet He is not two but one Christ.'

Under the human conditions of the Messianic life Christ was the Lord and Master of His disciples,

as He was their Friend. He could teach them, order them, lead them, be their example. It was only when that life had passed the supreme test of dedication, when He had made a sacrifice of it to the Creator Father for the sake of man, that He could be with them always, even unto the end of the world, and that His Spirit could descend upon them, that they could live by His life.

So far we are speaking anthropomorphically. Suppose we try and speak in philosophical terms. The Incarnation embodied the universal in the particular, God in man. The life of Christ having been sacrificed, the particular having returned to the universal, is capable of inhering in the individual, in all the individuals which belong to it, in the species of which they are members. God is not a particular term, in Him all things consist; in Him we live and more and have our being. The life of Christ is universal too. Men may share the life of Christ as they cannot share the life of any dead hero.

It has been the general belief and testimony of the Christian Church that it does so share in the life of Christ. 'God translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: Who is the image of the invisible God . . . all things have been created through Him and unto Him . . . and He is the head of the Body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead' (*Col. i. 13-18*). The first two chapters of the Epistle to the Colossians continue the theme of the union of Christians with Christ through His Death and Resurrection: 'You hath He reconciled in the

Body of His flesh through death, to present you holy' (ibid., i. 21, 22), 'having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein you were also raised with Him . . . from the dead' (ibid., ii. 12). Finally, 'Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested in glory' (ibid., iii. 3, 4). Fellowship in the life of Christ, according to S. Paul, was made possible by the sacrifice of the life.

Without recourse to Greek logic, or employing semi-gnostic phrases, Christ may well have thought of the sacrifice of the Messiah as the setting free of His life from flesh and blood to be the power and spirit of the kingdom of God. He looked for a supernatural kingdom, and was conscious of being Himself supernatural: yet it was His life made subject to conditions of human experience, temptations, trials, endurance, faith in another world, grace and endeavour, that the kingdom was to share, not the unknowable as well as unknown life which Scripture describes as glory.

This was the purpose for which the life of Christ was wanted, if we may so say, by God to Whom it was offered in sacrifice. It was to be the life of the kingdom of the redeemed. The life was the sort of life men could live by, because it was a human life. It was a life that could be shared by others and by all because it was God's life.

It was to be a gift of God because it is a life freely offered to man, and, until they accept it, apart from them; yet it preserved the nature of freedom which the Creator gave to man, because man can take it or refuse it, and having taken can still deny. Yet it

was an offering in human life by One Who was a man; and it was an offering historically brought about by human sin and purposed in the will of the offerer to defeat sin of its power.

It was, then, a triumph over sin and an atonement for it. It fulfilled that necessity of Atonement which we have seen to be demanded in literature and life as well as by religious philosophers.

Sin is not atoned for until somehow the sin is made to work out for good. A traitor may sometimes convert the result of his treachery into the greater advantage of his betrayed friend. Joseph can pardon his brothers because their cruelty has brought him to great honour and power to save life. Prospero, with the aid of unseen powers, can seal the reconciliation in the happy marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand.

The only atonement for sin on the world scale, for man's offence against a holy Creator, is the turning of such sin by man's representative and God's own love into a means of redounding to the greater glory of God. And this we believe to be true of the life of the Church of God. We do more than believe it: the Church bears witness to it in its collective experience and faith, and has done so since Pentecost.

S. Paul no doubt was a mystic. His conversion was a tremendous personal religious experience. He had visions and revelations and was caught up into the third heaven. He had, moreover, an intense penetration into the truths which he believed of the Christian life. But those truths which he held, taught, and indeed saw so intensely were not based

on his experience. They were in fact dogmas, dogmas which he held intellectually, taught as divine institutions, as well as experienced mystically. He could say: 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' 'I am crucified with Christ,' but he could also write to the Colossians: 'You died and your life is hidden with Christ in God' (iii. 3); while to people whom he had never seen he writes: 'Are you ignorant that all we who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? . . . we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death . . . reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus' (*Rom.* vi. 3-11).

'In Christ,' 'Christ in us,' were not to S. Paul raptures of religion, they were descriptions of the actualities of the religion of Christ; they were as much his interpretation of the Resurrection of Christ, his rationale of the state of the elect Church as they were profound experiences.

His teaching about the Body of Christ of which we are members depends on the truth that unity with the Church is unity with Christ. 'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye also were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.' 'He gave some to be Apostles, and some prophets . . . unto the building up of the Body of Christ' that we 'may grow up in all things unto Him which is the Head, even Christ.'

Again, his teaching on sonship in Christ, on which he dwells with such insistence in writing to the back-sliding Galatians, rests on the belief in union with

Christ. 'Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts' (*Gal.* iv. 6); 'Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus' (*ibid.*, iii. 26); and still more violently the contrast, 'Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the Law; ye are fallen away from grace' (*ibid.*, v. 4).

Grace, to S. Paul, is the life of Christ accepted by faith. To the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians he writes that this putting on of Christ or entering into Christ's life is effected by baptism. 'So reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus' (*Rom.* vi. 11). S. John teaches the same in Christ's words, 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches' (*S. John* xv. 5).

It is important for our purpose to observe the distinction between this gift of the life of Christ to the Church and mysticism as an individual intuition. The one is objective. It is to be taken or refused: the other is subjective and exists in a personal relation. The one is the constitutive fact of the Christian Church, it separates Christian from unbeliever: the other is an experience, the same in kind with all mystical experiences which are not bound even to Christianity, still less to Catholicism, though their deepest achievements are probably made in Catholic devotion. The one is social: the other is individual. The one is by nature sacramental: for the other the name 'mystical' may be reserved. In this sense, wider than the technical definition, the Church is itself a sacrament, and the life within it is sustained by the sacramental fact of membership and by particular sacraments whether of restoration or renewal.

So we come to the most relevant point that this which we call the sacramental truth of Christ's life in the Church is derived from the Cross, whereas the mystical union with Christ is an immediate intuition.

Now this conception of the Church as a sacramental organism giving life to its members, the repository of salvation and grace, the extension of the incarnate life in the world, the object of the Sacrifice upon the Cross, is Catholicism.

At this point let us return to the Christ of the Gospels. The tendency of modern criticism is to reveal a Christ Who looked forward to an organic kingdom, possessing authority. Sacramental ideas may belong just as rightly to the apocalyptic spirit of Judaism as to the mystery religions of Egypt or Hellas. Alongside of that the tradition of the Church from the very beginning was sacramental. The sacramental, authoritarian Church, enshrining a life identified with Christ's, was what actually happened. But if Christ was such as both criticism and tradition unite in this case in making Him, the natural conclusion is that He died to give life to the kingdom, and that He meant the sacramental rites which He seems to have ordained to be means of imparting His own life within the new kingdom of God.

The only other explanation which eschatological critics have to offer is that He died in the belief—the fond belief as it proved—that God would be forced to vindicate His Messiahship by a miraculous deliverance. Anything more unlike the known relations of Jesus Christ with His heavenly Father

cannot be imagined. True to His vision of fulfilling the Law and the Prophets and inaugurating a new kingdom, He laid down His life as a sacrifice, enduring all the agony of human death, that His life might rise again into the eternal life of the kingdom of God.

And in the event we find the little circle of His followers convinced of His Resurrection by many infallible proofs. We see them rejoicing as they walk away from the scene of His last appearance and His disappearance. They waited for the outpouring of power from on high to begin their ministry. They baptized converts in the Name of Jesus, and all continued steadfast in doctrine and fellowship and Eucharist and prayer. They developed a faith of which the symbol was the Cross, and preached the Resurrection of Christ and salvation through His Name. They gradually freed themselves from Judaism, and developed an organized authority of their own. The consecration of Christ's Sacrifice and the sacramental partaking of it became their regular worship and bond of fellowship. Their hardest struggle was to maintain and express the Godhead of their Master, because they knew in their bones that on the truth of His nature depended the existence of their own life in the Church.

The kingdom of God and the achieved result of the Sacrifice on the Cross thus proved in the story of mankind to be the Holy Catholic Church.

CHAPTER VI

FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION

THE object of the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus Christ was something greater and wider in scope than the winning of forgiveness from God. It was the salvation of the world and a new life for man ; and, in face of this, forgiveness must appear almost an incident. But if the effect of our argument was in any degree to minimize the importance of forgiveness in favour of a belief in a change of our status in relation to God, effected without effort or change on our part by the work of Christ, we should be going altogether wrong, and stating the truth and the faith of Christianity treacherously out of due proportion.

The forgiveness of sin is the direct and immediate purpose of atonement, and so far from losing sight of that, what we need to understand is that the kingdom of God or the Holy Catholic Church exists in the first place as God's remedy for sin. The Apostles were right in proclaiming that the purpose of all that had happened in their experience was in order that repentance and remission of sins should be preached throughout the world.

If we ask the familiar question so often put in the world to-day, What is the Church ? or What is re-

ligion ? and avoid high-flown and obscure answers, we find two answers which represent what people think about religion or observe in it, which yet we know to be inadequate. To some religion is a moral code enforced by the supposed sanction of God : to others religion is a method of worship. If you want to appear critical, you call worship *cultus*.

These two answers are inadequate. Christianity, as a matter of fact, is not a moral code. Righteousness was the basis of the Old Testament : in the New Testament the righteousness of faith is derivative, it is a consequence. Nor is Christianity a *cultus* in which morals are irrelevant.

The effect of treating religion as primarily a moral system, a treatment which is common enough and was to some extent even characteristic of the nineteenth century, so far from making it a great moral force in the world, tends to reduce it to the level of general consent, the feasible, the pragmatic. It becomes a culture, and falls, like other human systems, before other forces more violent or more disintegrating. The really great historical fact about Christianity is its survival in a changing world. Its morality is uncodified, it is the expression of a spirit, it is eruptive and in advance of its age.

On the other hand, a religion which is only a *cultus*—also a quite practical danger of the present day—is equally removed from Christianity ; and why ? Because the whole system of Church, Worship, and Sacraments is built up on the Atonement, and Christ died as the result of sin to save mankind from sin. Sin is the force and the fact which makes the world what its Creator means it not to be. Sin

thwarts human progress and makes life what it need not be. The world needs redemption from sin.

And as the same Power which made or makes the world also redeems it from sin, religion, which is first the recognition of that Power, cannot but lay its emphasis on the fact of sin and proclaim that reconciliation with that Power is the first condition of union with it.

What is wrong with religion is not that it makes too much fuss about sin and forgiveness, but that it tacitly accepts the world's standard of whole departments of morality and excludes evils of a social, commercial, and financial order from the category of sin. There is a sense of wrong abroad in the world, but it is very largely felt by those who suffer. There is very little sense of the guilt of sin, of need of forgiveness. As a practical issue insistence on sin and forgiveness holds together the spiritual and moral elements in religion; and so both in theory and practice repentance and forgiveness ought to be kept in the foreground of Christian doctrine and Christian life.

We have seen that there is an ethical problem as to how forgiveness is possible, that is to say compatible with justice and therefore moral. In view of the Christian solution of the major problem, which posits universal sin, it is perhaps hardly a surprise that in Christianity the minor problem of how human individuals are to forgive wrong is not allowed to be a problem at all. The question is whether the murderer, Agamemnon or the man now awaiting his sentence in gaol, can be forgiven; whether the true lover, Adam Bede or any clerk living in the

suburbs, can make it up with the man who has taken and betrayed his sweetheart; whether the friend can care again for the comrade who slandered him and took his job; whether the man of proved dishonesty of conduct can again be received among gentlemen.

Now Christ is absolute on this point. He tells us we have to presume what in the nature of the case cannot be proved. The brother who repents is to be forgiven seventy times seven times; but the one who persists in impenitence is to be as a heathen and a publican. But He was speaking as to members of the kingdom of God, and they were to know how much they themselves needed to be forgiven by God. The offender meets the offended on the common basis of the need of forgiveness. This insistence by Christ on human readiness to forgive as they hope to be forgiven is perhaps the chief way in which the words of Christ press home the sense of sin.

We have seen how Christ's teaching always implies God's willingness freely to forgive the penitent. In the twin parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Piece of Silver the repentance of a sinner is said to be a positive cause of joy. We can compare this with S. Paul's teaching that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Every pastor knows of smug, self-satisfied persons for whom some overt sin seems the only pathway to conversion, and the thought, though risky, is not far removed from Christ's own saying that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance. The

pastoral and missionary experience of the Apostles doubtless supported this fact that there was more prospect of conversion to the kingdom of God for the penitent than for those who had, or thought they had, every reason for self-satisfaction. If, then, God is so able and so ready to forgive, what was the need of the Atonement ?

The answer is that forgiveness itself is a step on the way to the conversion of the penitent into a course contrary to his sin. The joy in heaven is over what the erstwhile sinner is to become ; grace abounds to make the penitent a power for God's glory.

The new thing which Christ taught was not that God forgives sin, which was not in question, but that the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins ; that whatsoever the Apostles loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven ; that whosoever sins they forgave should be forgiven. It was the assurance admitting into or restoring in the kingdom of God that He taught in words, and effected by His Sacrifice ; for His Sacrifice was to create and give life to the kingdom, to make it the continuance of His own power in the world. Forgiveness became a quickening reality, a sacramentally bestowed grace or power, when it was attached to living membership in the kingdom of God.

So the Apostles could announce that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name. Repentance and forgiveness are not enough. But if the penitent forgiven is thereby caught up into a moving and creative life which is the negation of the life of sin, then the sin of the penitent really

is done away. 'Shall we sin then that grace may abound? Nay, how shall we who are dead unto sin live any longer therein?'

Pardon or forgiveness in the Christian dispensation is part of incorporation in a spiritual community. That is the true reconciliation of the soul with God, and Christ offered His life to be the inward and spiritual power of that sacramental kingdom which we call the Church. We are baptized into that Sacrifice to live in the power of that life, and so we proclaim, 'I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.' Baptism does not do two things, wash away our sins and make us members of the Church. The one method of forgiveness which the Atonement effected was to create a redeemed life into which we can be incorporated by baptism.

The implicit understanding of this truth by the early Church accounts for the problem which was created by apostasy. It seemed to remove the sinner outside the sphere of grace. The curious device adopted of allowing apostates a renewal by assigning to them the merits of confessors, whose virtue was the opposite to their sin, seems to have been a sort of attempt to procure them a supplementary Atonement.

The conflict of rigorists whose tendency is to regard sin on the part of the baptized as unforgivable, and formalists who tend to take it, so to speak, in their stride, shows how the doctrine of forgiveness can be exaggerated in opposite directions by the human mind. Nevertheless, the power of absolution for members of the Church has been from the first recognized and practised. In the very first

stages of the Christian Church there arose the obvious necessity of condemning sin in the members and of reconciling them on penitence. S. Paul tells us how he did both at Corinth. Open penance and subsequent reconciliation for certain types of sin continued through the early centuries. Monasticism encouraged the discipline of confession, and the effort after sanctity promoted it. The priest's part in private confessions was vague for ten centuries, but, as Dr. Kirk says (*Vision of God*, p. 288), 'The significant thing was that he always had some part to play in the rite.' In 1215 Confession and Absolution became part of the formal discipline of the Western Church. From the point of view from which we are considering the matter, the variation in practice depended on the view as to what sins cut a member off from the unity of the Church, or as to what can be taken to constitute true contrition; but the main principle remains the same that forgiveness is given by God to the truly penitent through his unity with Christ's Body, the Church. Even in modern practice only mortal sins must be submitted to Absolution; and however mortal sins may be codified, they are defined as sins which separate us from the life of Christ.

The result of the Atoning Sacrifice was that the life of Christ became the life of Christ in the Church, a life for its members. But a life is to be lived. It is set before us in the Church, but it is not a mere status of membership. The very word 'life' refuses to be intelligible in a static sense. Life is an activity. The life of Christ could be sacrificed on the Cross, it can be thought of as given to the Church, but it

would remain an abstraction if it did not become active and actual in the lives of Christians.

Atonement to be complete must include the salvation of the individual. So when we thank God for what Christ has done for us, that is not the end of the matter. Practically speaking, it is the beginning. What Christ has done *for* us has yet to be done *in* us. The salvation which is ours by the deed of Christ has yet to be worked out to our salvation by the grace of God actually in our lives and characters.

The scriptural expression is that it is already ours by faith. Righteousness is imputed to us because it now belongs to us. It is ours by faith if we have accepted Christ and set ourselves in the direction of living His life. But we are not actually righteous until we have become righteous in life and character. We never do become altogether righteous, we never reach the goal. 'Not that I have already obtained,' says S. Paul, 'or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus' (*Phil.* iii. 12). The incarnate life of Christ was itself a growth, a progress. That may have been one reason why it had to end with dying, for whatever may be the truth in the old doctrine that death is the result of sin, in all human experience at any rate the act of dying seems to be a way-mark of the whole journey that we call our life.

The incarnate life of Christ was a growth, in that it was an effort. The salvation that was to be His to give had to be achieved. Of this there is plenty of written confirmation in the New Testament. It would not have been an incarnation otherwise, but

a theophany, which is a pagan conceit. 'Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man' (*S. Luke* ii. 52). He had to fulfil all righteousness, and He endured temptation at the outset of His ministry. The absolute sureness of the conduct of Christ does not mean that He was without temptation and the need of effort; it is rather the measure, the full measure of His success.

The spending of nights in prayer reveal a little of what the effort of life was to Him. The strenuousness of His rebuff to S. Peter when He called him Satan shows how the words of the Apostle moved Him: and in reference to the same subject of His Passion we have other evidences of the spiritual strain which it caused—'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!' 'Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. . . . And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground' (*S. Luke* xxii. 42-44).

The question inevitably arises whether the moral struggle which Christ knew means that He could have sinned. Boso asked the question of S. Anselm (*Cur Deus Homo*, ii. x), who answers with some subtlety that all power depends on will. Christ could lie if He willed it: but He could not will to lie, so it is no less exact to say that He could not lie. Thus He both could and could not lie.

It is a very good answer, and what our curiosity deserves, so we had better be satisfied with it. The problem, if it is one, is really only part of the problem

of free will which is insoluble in words, but not in experience. Cato both could and could not act as a coward. It is character, not circumstance, on which we rely when we say that a certain man couldn't do something base.

The perfection of God belongs, says S. Anselm, to His eternal immutability, not to necessity. The integrity of the will of Christ belongs to His moral nature, not to a formal impeccability. Christ, the Captain of our salvation, says an early Christian, was made perfect through suffering; learned obedience by the things that He suffered; and hath been tempted in all points like as we are, without sin. According to S. John, Christ speaks in prayer of sanctifying Himself for the disciples' sake.

The life, then, that Christ offered on the Cross in sacrifice was perfect in the sense that it was completed, a new creation, the first and only perfected life of man. It was also perfect in its becoming. I want to make this phrase clear. We can sum up a life in thought as what it has become, what it is at the final moment: but actually a life is what it is at any and every moment of its course. Its value and reality in the eternal, that is, in the timeless judgement of God, is what it is not at the last stroke or any other stroke of clock time but in the duration of its being.

It is this life of Christ which is set before the members of the Church. It is theirs already in faith, and it is to become theirs by the operation of faith. This double mode of possession runs through the New Testament account of salvation, and heresies both ancient and modern have gone

astray over it. Yet it is fairly clear that, in the beginning of the Church, salvation was regarded as something which already belonged to the Christian as won by Christ and accepted by the convert; and yet he had to work out his own salvation in fear and trembling. Moreover, He Who had begun a good work in them would perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is already in the Christian's life. It is there in faith. Faith accepts it, sees it. Faith is the assurance of what is hoped for. In the words of the Church of England Catechism we are already inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and we thank God that He has brought us into this way of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. But at the same time faith is something more than assurance; it is the spiritual energy that acts upon the salvation given and makes it become actual in the faithful life. It is the corollary of grace—'By grace are ye saved through faith.'

We have noted a very little what the process of achievement meant in the life of Christ—the trial, the strain, prayer, and agony. The renewal of the life in us is not different. God's grace does not reduce the effort of the free spirit; the energy of faith may be, and often is, a sore conflict. To be baptized into the death of Christ means to become an inheritor of the victory Christ won by His death, but not without something of the same experience. Dying unto sin, putting off the old man, may be in a way metaphors but they express costly experiences; they are not ceremonial. As Calvary followed the Last Supper, so the struggle follows the Sacrament

in the Christian's life. Christ's own words of warning about the narrow way, about taking up the Cross daily, leave us in no doubt as to what He foresaw the life of the kingdom would be to its members.

The words of S. Paul are born of experience of that life of the kingdom: the flesh lusteth against the Spirit so that we cannot do the things that we would. He thanks God through Jesus Christ for grace and at least assurance of victory, but only after what must be described as terrific conflict. It is hardly true that this means we must be making measured progress in holiness and righteousness, getting better and better every day, that at any moment our salvation is incomplete. Of such as little children is the kingdom of heaven.

It does mean that as long as mortal life lasts the energy of the life of Christ must be active in us. Grace must be operating and received, faith apprehending. Life in the kingdom of God is not less strenuous than life in the kingdoms of this world. The Spirit must lust against the flesh. The pace has to be kept up as by one who runs that he may obtain.

The Church that was nearest in time to the incarnate life of Christ lived in an atmosphere of the Spirit. The Pentecostal Church bore witness to outpourings of the Spirit, and S. Paul writes in the same vein of spiritual enthusiasm: 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law?' 'Having begun in the Spirit are ye now perfected in the flesh?' 'If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.'

In those days the knowledge of the Spirit was not reduced to a formula. People whose conception of the Christian life was expressed in such ideas and language were keenly aware that the salvation which they rejoiced was theirs already was ceaselessly operating and demanded their every effort to appropriate.

It may be that some of Christ's parables of the kingdom taught the same truth. The seed growing secretly, the leaven, the tree that bore no fruit until the gardener worked at it, the sower with its account of him that receives the word and brings forth fruit with patience, may refer to the growth of the kingdom in the heart. Others more naturally refer to the growth of the kingdom itself as an organism in the world. The safest interpretation of parables is to find out the one lesson that each inculcates, not any implication that can be wrung from them.

Nevertheless, the growth of the kingdom in the world and the maturing of the life of the kingdom in the soul are kindred ideas, and it may well be that what is true of the one is true of the other. So what Christ achieved in His own incarnate Person He now achieves in each and every member of the kingdom. His rôle of Saviour does not become a sinecure when He ascended into heaven.

The writer to the Hebrews is most explicit on the completeness of the work of Christ: 'Now once,' he says, 'at the end of the ages, hath He been manifested to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.' But he occupies the rest of his Epistle with exhortations to the faithful to secure and perfect that salvation in themselves: 'Let us run with patience

the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith.'

The object of this chapter was to show how the life of Christ given to the kingdom or Church as a whole becomes the life of the individual or saved person. That is the last step in building up the doctrine of the Atonement. It does not come by what may be called mere membership. That would not satisfy what we know of Christ, the Christ Who preached the Sermon on the Mount, Who spoke of men being known by their fruits, Who demanded watching and praying, and taught the Lord's Prayer. It would not even satisfy our own moral nature. We have spoken briefly of the moral and spiritual conflict involved; but the life of Christ is not made the life of the Christian by his own unaided efforts. If man by his own effort could adopt the life of Christ there would be no logical reason for the Atonement at all. There would be a break in the process of salvation where the work of Christ would stop and man's begin. If that were so there is no reason why man should not start out from the Sermon on the Mount; and the Sacrifice of Christ could be left out of account. Not by mere membership, not by unaided conflict, nor, thirdly, is it by mystical intuition. That also breaks off the work of Christ short of the salvation of the individual man.

Mystical penetration does not necessarily, or even mainly, fasten on to the organism of the Church to which we have already traced the imparted life of Christ. S. Paul is pre-eminent among Christians for his mystical intuition of Christ and sense of union

with Him; but he above all others teaches that salvation comes by grace. Grace, the work of Christ in us, is the process by which salvation becomes ours. Through grace Christ perfects in us the life which He perfected in His own human Body. In the process of grace, membership, human effort, and mystic apprehension are held in perfect co-ordination.

In the broadest use of the word, Sacraments are the means of grace. Baptism imparts membership, and it demands a life of personal effort; and it requires not only (in the case of infants not at all) at the moment of the rite, but always as long as membership lasts, a faith which fastens on to the death and the new life of our Saviour. The sacramental life is both a receiving of a gift and a sharing in the life of Christ given to us. The English word 'partaking' fortunately includes both.

We receive the death unto sin by dying unto sin, that is, by penitence and resisting temptation. S. Paul calls it, in a phrase which is more than a metaphor, dying with Christ. Likewise we receive the new birth by living the life of effort and devotion and loyalty of service. But always it is the grace of Christ working in us.

So in the other Sacraments; God strengthens us with the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of hands, but Confirmation is an arming for actual service, an acceptance of responsibility. Again, the gift is a gift of power, and power is only known in the exercise of it. God restores us to Christian grace in Absolution, but Penance is part of the fight against sin—'a means of progress to perfection for the

baptized.’¹ Above all, it is the life of Christ which we receive in Holy Communion: it is the gift of God. But what is this gift of life, if we do not proceed to live it?

The Church is an outward organized body to which we belong. It enshrines also a life which on its godward side is the perfect life of Christ, sacrificed on the Cross, and on its human side is the life of grace and faith. It extends that life to us in Sacraments which are the action of the Atoning Sacrifice upon the human soul. It holds us to that life by a discipline of loyalty. So the life of Christ which was sacrificed because of man’s sin becomes the principle of the kingdom of God, and through the action of grace the salvation of the individual.

Now the life of Christ was lived in the power of the Spirit of God. Mary’s conception was announced to her in the words, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.’ His baptism by S. John Baptist was an endowment with the Spirit. The realism with which this was understood was emphasized by the description of the descent of the Spirit ‘in a bodily form.’ He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, returned in the power of the Spirit to His mission in Galilee. With the Finger of God He cast out devils. Here in the centre of His mission the presence and power of the Spirit of God is given a tremendous emphasis. It is not only adduced by Christ Himself as a sign that ‘the kingdom of God is come among you,’ it is also the fearful occasion of the unforgivable sin, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. I take this to mean that Christ taught

¹ P. Batiffol, quoted by Dr. Kirk, *Vision of God*, p. 280.

that denial of Himself might be forgiven to men—S. Peter and S. Paul could both subsequently be pardoned—but denial of the power and purpose of God Himself could find no forgiveness; there can be no salvation for those who refuse salvation.

Christ opened His Messianic mission at Nazareth with a reading from Isaiah and a sermon on the text, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has sent Me . . .' According to S. John, the Spirit was to be the means of His return to the Church after His going away from them. The writer to the Hebrews summarizes the Crucifixion in the words, 'Through an eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God.' In His Resurrection appearances He is represented as breathing upon them and saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' The disciples were bidden to wait for the fulfilment of the Father's promise of the Spirit before they began their own ministry. Pentecost and its events were accepted by the Apostles as the fulfilment of Christ's injunction and of the prophecy of Joel, 'I will pour out My Spirit.'

There is no real distinction between the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God, because the Spirit in Christ *was* the Spirit of God. From the first the Apostolic Church was full of the Spirit. There may be, from our point of view, a certain simplicity in the value attached to spiritual manifestations in that first age of the Church. To us the proof of the Spirit may lie rather in the conviction which led them so to describe the occurrences than in the occurrences themselves.

But S. Paul in his Epistles deepens the whole

conception of the Spirit. He does not do so by moralizing the idea, reducing it to metaphor, a process which people now, oddly enough, describe as spiritualizing; he deepens the conception by a greater realism. To be 'in the Spirit' means to him to be living the supernatural, resurrection life of the Messiah's people. It is so real that the Law which applied to the natural man is abrogated for those who live in the Spirit. Having the Spirit of God we are sons of God by adoption. We pray in the Spirit. We may indeed decline from the Spirit and walk in the flesh, but that is simply to desert the life of Christ which is ours. 'If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' So close does he keep to the common facts of life that he allows that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit 'so that ye may not do the things that ye would.' It is significant that 'what he wills' is for the spiritual man, i.e. the Christian, the desire of the Spirit.

It is with this realism that we must regard Churchmanship. The redemption of Christ has been to make available for us His own life. Membership, grace, sacraments, prayer, endeavour, and faith itself are the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives. The status which we have as redeemed Christians is resolved into the dynamic energy of a divine life which quickens our mortal bodies, and is to sow the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Christ in a fallen, decadent, and corrupt world by the power of the Spirit of Life.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH'S SACRIFICE

OUR purpose in this essay has been all the time practical religion, not academic discussion. We ask why Christ died, because we want to do with our lives what Christ means us to do. We want to reunite Christianity on the lines which Christ laid down. It matters intensely to us what Christ meant by His teachings and actions, because we are sure that the only true Christianity must rest on Christ.

The only hope for a united Christianity or, as some would put it, a return of Christendom, lies in truth to the Gospel of Christ. The world is far too prone nowadays to admire Jesus Christ and follow Him its own way; and it leads nowhere. Not only big ideas like the unity of Christendom but the immediate validity of the Christian religion for the individual Christian soul depend on faithfulness to the Person of Christ and the conviction that we are following His purpose and accepting His dispensation. In matters of moral duty of ourselves or of society, in receiving means of grace, in prayers and thoughts of God, our only hope of assurance, if we are Christians, is the certainty of our whole mind that we are pursuing the religion of Jesus Christ Himself.

In no activity of religion is this faithfulness to

the Author of our religion more necessary than in worship, in what we do when we 'go to church.' In worship a religion expresses its soul. By its worship the nature of a religion is brought home to its own adherents. In the long run we learn more by what we do than by what we are taught.

Christ, then, must be manifested in the worship of the Christian Church. Its characteristic worship is and has always been the Eucharist. If we go back to its institution in the Upper Room at the Last Supper I do not suppose that there can be much doubt that the words of Christ did include an order for the continuance of the rite. Every line of evidence contributes to establish the institution of the Eucharist as an act of worship on Christ's own injunction.

There are the direct words of the Gospel of S. Luke, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' Then there is the summing up of the Christian life in the account of the first days of the Church, 'They continued steadfast in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.' The earliest written account of the Eucharist is in S. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, where it is described as taking place, 'when ye come together.' The Corinthians, indeed, were abusing the rite, and S. Paul takes occasion to state quite clearly both what he understood the Lord Jesus to have said and done on the night on which He was betrayed, and his own doctrine and admonition to reverence in the observance. They are to understand that they are showing the Lord's death till He come. They are to discern the Lord's Body; to eat and drink

worthily and after due examination of conscience lest they be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

All this depends on the clear statement of what the Lord said and did, and we know that S. Paul was careful to distinguish what he believed came directly from the Lord, and what he believed himself to be justified in commenting thereon.

There is also the very interesting evidence of the Fourth Gospel. It is very generally recognized that the Eucharist, as the actual practice of the Church of the first century, underlies the considerable portion of that Gospel which is occupied with the thought of Christ as the Bread of Life. If it could be supposed that the Breaking of Bread or the Eucharist was a rite which grew up at the end of the first century and needed justification, it might be thought that these passages were an attempt to read back the doctrine into the life of Christ. But, in the first place, the supposition is historically very difficult, and in the second the Fourth Gospel does not explain the Eucharist, it gives teaching which the Eucharist helps to explain.

What S. John is doing, if we are to accept the passages in question as his meditations rather than as the reported words of Christ, is to give the Eucharist a more mystical meaning than may have been generally recognized or attached to it. The only natural explanation of filling the narrative with Eucharistic teaching and omitting all reference to the institution is that the ordinance was already adequately described and accepted, indeed a matter of everyday experience, and that what the Church

needed, in the opinion of the evangelist, was more spiritual or mystical teaching, either in regard to the Eucharist itself, or in regard to Christian life, teaching which in that case the Eucharist would exemplify.

We may fairly suppose from the very title, 'The Breaking of Bread,' and from the nature of the abuse which S. Paul had to reprimand at Corinth, that the aspect of the Eucharist as a communal meal was fully recognized. S. Paul, while reforming the practice, still gave due emphasis to this conception in the language about being 'partakers of one Bread.' We may note that the same idea is expressed in the sort of consecration prayer which is contained in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.

The essential meaning of this communal eating and drinking is explained by S. Paul, but his explanation is not phrased as if it was in any sense a new teaching. 'The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?' (1 Cor. x. 16). This passage occurs not in the section of his Epistle in which he is directly dealing with the Eucharist, but in the previous chapter in which he is combating idolatry, the joining in idol feasts and the temptation to idolatrous unchastity. Christianity, he says, in so many words is a partaking of the sacrificed Body of Christ, and that is incompatible with the partaking of idol sacrifices. An idol may be nothing, the beast offered in a heathen temple may be mere meat, but there is something devilish behind the external rite of the heathen altar. Therefore the Christian need not

be over inquisitive about the antecedents of the dinner set before him by his heathen friends; but directly it is made a matter of conscience by the information that the meat is connected with an idolatrous sacrifice, it is to be refused because the eating of it would imply a fellowship or a communion with devils.

Christianity is the communion of Christ; it is summed up, recapitulated, to use an old Atonement word, in the Eucharist.

In the next chapter, finding fault with the Corinthians' abuse of the Lord's Supper, S. Paul refers to his teaching already given on a previous occasion, presumably when they were first instructed in the Faith. 'I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,' and then follows the account of the Institution in the Upper Room and S. Paul's comment, 'For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' This text is inserted as an explanation of the words of Christ, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' The communion, then, of bread and wine was not merely a communal meal, an *agapé*; it derived its inner meaning from the showing forth of the Lord's death; it was an eating and drinking of the Sacrifice of the Lord.

Christianity, we have said, is summed up in the Eucharist. Primarily Christ gave His Body and Blood not to make a service but to make Christianity and the Christian Church. Because He did that, the solemn rite in which He pledged Himself to the Sacrifice became the Church's act of worship.

The result is that to understand the Eucharist we

must apprehend the central fact of Christianity ; and conversely the Eucharist as we grasp its meaning will help us to understand the true nature of Christianity. Both paths lead to one truth, the doctrinal and the liturgical ; and these are the two ways which experience shows us lead the human mind to the knowledge of God.

Thought, meditation, instruction lead some ; practice, prayer, and worship lead others. The average Christian treads both paths : his worship leads to faith, his faith leads him to worship.

But the fabric of Christian truth is not framed by propping up one support against the other, so that it stands with a precarious security. The Christian religion and Christian worship are both pitched on the ground of fact. Christ did offer Himself in sacrifice on the Cross ; He did so with a clear purpose of inaugurating a new covenant or relation between God and man. From that act arose the Catholic Church, and the life and power of that Church from the beginning was understood to be the life of Christ imparted to its members.

As in the first case, that is, in the Upper Room and before the Crucifixion, the action of the Eucharist, the taking and breaking and blessing of the bread and wine, was the consecration of Himself by Christ to the actual Sacrifice which was to be upon the Cross ; so every repetition by the human apostle or priest after the fact of the Crucifixion is still the offering of Himself by Christ.

Christ needed only once to suffer death ; but if the purpose of that death was the offering of Himself and the suffering the once necessary means

to that end, Christ is ever offering Himself. The spiritual truth of the Sacrifice is outside time, though it was necessary that God should come into time, that is, be incarnate, become man, in order that the Sacrifice might be effected in the sphere of human life and in conflict with sin.

I do not mean that the earthly Eucharist is to be regarded as the counterpart of what, for want of any better terms, can be called the worship of heaven and not as the counterpart of the Cross. That is an idea which it is worth while to guard against. The Eucharist nineteen hundred years after the Cross is to be understood in the light of the Eucharist twelve hours before the Cross. Both acts look definitely to the scene of the dying of Christ. But there is a sense in which the Sacrifice is not temporal but eternal. The human remembrance of that Sacrifice, every human reception of that imparted life, must, from the nature of man, be an occurrence in time. Time and eternity touch in human life, and the spark of their contact is worship.

There is no objection to speaking of the Eucharist as the pleading of the Sacrifice of Christ, provided that by pleading is meant offering and not something less. The expression 'pleading the Sacrifice' is sometimes used in order to avoid the word 'offering,' and thus reduces the Eucharist to a purely human process. We plead the Sacrifice in union with Christ's pleading. Christ's pleading is a metaphor; it means His giving. In the Eucharist the Church is united with Christ, represents Christ: otherwise the Eucharist is just 'a service.'

The using of the words of Christ, the repetition

of His actions, the using of the Sacrament which He Himself used, is a standing witness that the Church is acting in His Name, that the Eucharist is something given and done by Christ. The Church in Christ's Name is offering the Sacrifice which Christ offered, that the Church may continue to live by the life which He offered and offers.

To descend a step into the region of our present failures, it is the Sacrifice in the Eucharist that needs to be taught at the present time in the Church of England; and the first essential in teaching it, is the teaching of the Sacrifice of Christ as the object of the Incarnation, as the climax of the ministry of Christ, as the cause of Christian life in the Church. We must have a popular preaching of the Atonement, an intelligible doctrine of Christ's Sacrifice and what it effected, before we can hope for an understanding of Christian sacrifice in the Eucharist.

It is true that much is said about the centrality of the Cross. Hymns teach children that 'He died that we might be forgiven,' and hymns supplemented by more or less passionate appeals bid their elders to 'come to the Cross' and aver that it is 'mighty to save' and takes away our sins. But there is an inconclusiveness about all this which must be felt by persons of ordinary intelligence, and even by those who do not consciously bring their intelligence to bear upon it at all.

It is all very well to point out that the Church has always taught the fact of salvation by the Cross, but not gone further and laid down authoritatively an explanation of how the Cross saves. That is formally true, but it is not true that the Church has

not repeatedly expressed the doctrine of the Cross in very definite terms, and those doctrines have been objective. The old pre-Anselmic office hymns which spoke of 'this world's ransom' and how Christ 'spoiled the spoiler of his prey' by 'art yet deeper than his own,' crude perhaps, even mistaken, but definite, bear witness to a doctrine which at least taught a Sacrifice. S. Anselm's doctrine was very intellectual, but it must have reached the crowd in some forms which were generally apprehended. The hanging of the crucifix in courts of justice possibly bears witness to this. Nor must we forget the witness of the Mass itself, and it was not regarded quite as the modern English Churchman regards 'a service.' Add the use of the crucifix. It may have been superstitious but it certainly was not merely ornamental.

So there certainly were in the past positive doctrines of the Cross as an efficient sacrifice, and I think it can be maintained that they all connected our salvation, forgiveness, and the state of grace directly with the Sacrifice of Christ. But now the Cross is spoken of as a putting up with hardships, as indeed is true. It is presented as showing what sin means to God, how God shares trouble and the effects of sin with man, as showing the love of God in Christ. All this is true enough and has its place, but every one knows that sacrifice is not showing anything at all, it is *doing something* for a purpose.

The doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice has received much attention of late years in sermons and tracts. The reason of the comparative lack of success has been the lack of clear and coherent teaching

about the Sacrifice of Christ, that is, about the Atonement. There has not been half the success that has marked the reinstatement of the doctrine of the Real Presence. The reason for this is that with our present grasp of Christian doctrine the Real Presence is intelligible. Within the Church, at least, whatever may be on that border line where religion slips into agnosticism, the Incarnation is held as a fact; the Person of Christ Who came to help mankind yet now hears the prayers of children is real. That His Presence should be real in the sacramental form chosen by Himself is not difficult to believe, and once believed, every instinct of worship and all the deeper experience of communion reacts to strengthen that faith.

It is relevant also to remember that much better work has been done by the present and last generation of scholars on the Incarnation than on the Atonement. The Church of the Incarnation has become quite an ordinary phrase; but if one was to speak of the Church of the Atonement, would it convey any meaning at all to an average congregation?

The point is that faith in the Incarnation assists belief in the Real Presence, that is, the presence of the *res sacramenti*, the Body of Christ. I suggest incidentally that the belief in the Real Presence protects the Incarnation from being thought of in a pantheistic way. But we need a vital faith in the Atonement to assist belief in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. And yet theology teaches that the purpose of the Incarnation was the Atonement.

If a catechist should ask a fairly intelligent and instructed class of children what they offer to God

when they come to church on Sunday morning, the answers will be 'our money,' 'our praise and prayers,' 'ourselves,' 'bread and wine,' and only now and then will a shy and doubtful voice suggest, 'Jesus Christ.' The doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which certainly is the doctrine of the Eucharist as every liturgy witnesses, as S. Paul and the Gospels witness, is not intelligible and not grasped because there is behind it a failure to hold and teach a doctrine of the objective Sacrifice and Atonement made by Christ.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Cross of Christ is regarded as the most profoundly-moving demonstration of the love of Christ. It is preached with a wealth of appeal to sinners and to self-satisfied persons to turn them to repentance and to the Christian life. It is written of with pious, though mistaken, philosophy as the suffering of God. But it is not taught as the object for which Christ came, as the Supreme Sacrifice to eternal God which takes away sin because it gives a new life in which every Christian can have part. It is not placarded as the event which made and makes the Catholic Church.

Now if the Cross is regarded as something very moving, something demonstrating, even something converting, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is simply not adapted to be 'a remembrance' of it. There is nothing demonstrative in this sense about the offering and consecrating of bread and wine. The symbolism has all gone wrong. It can only be said that the Eucharist involves the Real Presence, and the Presence of Christ reminds us of what He has done on the Cross: but this would be a very roundabout

and unimpressive remembrance. If that were the rationale of the Eucharist, the Eucharistic Sacrifice must go by the board.

Further, it makes any remembrance of the Cross depend on the Real Presence, whereas from the Lord's own words it is certain that the Presence in the outward and visible signs depends on the Sacrifice. Some Protestant sects, I have heard, make the Lord's Supper a commemoration of the scene in the Upper Room. In that case neither Sacrifice, nor Real Presence, nor Sacrament, nor worship need enter into consideration; and to be consistent only bishops or presbyters should be invited to it. But if one thing is certain it is that the institution of the Eucharist in the Upper Room pointed to the Cross, and therefore it is the Cross and not the Last Supper which every Eucharist of the Church is designed by Christ to perpetuate.

We were speaking of the action of the Eucharist as not being adapted to be a remembrance of something which is only demonstrative. Every Sacrament, or outward sign of a grace, is congruous to the invisible reality of the gift. Dipping, or baptism, in water is congruous to the cleansing of the soul and coming forth to a new life. Layings on of hands, anointings, are real significations of the gifts of power, authority, bestowed; and Holy Communion is significant of the 'strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by bread and wine.' But we have to remember that even the strengthening and refreshing of our souls, according to all that we can learn from the occasion and form of Christ's

institution of the Sacrament, was secondary to the remembrance of the Sacrifice and derivative from it. 'Take and eat, for this is My Body which is given for you . . . this is the New Testament in My Blood.' When Christ took bread and wine He took them as something congruous to His Sacrifice. The words 'body' and 'blood' by which He denoted Himself had a sacrificial implication. His Body was being offered on the altar of the Cross, and His Blood was to be poured out. He was offering Himself as a Sacrifice, the offering of a perfect life to God which was to be shared by all humanity in the kingdom of God, and could be shared because He was the Christ and one with the Father. The Church of His followers and of all who should believe through their word was to partake of that life so offered.

'This is My Body which is given for you.' The Church using bread and wine as Christ used it, is doing something equally congruous to the offering of Christ, when once by the offering of Christ it means that which gives life and reality to the kingdom of God. Our existence as a worshipping Church, as a community daily dying unto sin, as the children of the new life, is in virtue of that Sacrifice of Christ by which He gave His life. The Church's act of worship proclaims that fact, renews and perpetuates it: for the Sacrifice of Christ because it takes place in the 'I am' of eternal deity can be renewed here and now 'as often as we eat this Bread and drink this Cup' in the time and place of the visible and human kingdom of God.

It would seem to be necessary in a sacrifice that

it should be offered to some one, that is, to God. It is the whole attitude of Christ rather than selected texts which leads us to regard His death as an offering to God for man, rather than as an automatic raising of the life of human kind. It was the Father's work and will that He came to do; the Passion was the cup that His Father had given Him, and 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit' was, according to an evangelist, His last Word from the Cross. The Incarnate Christ is a Mediator. If the Church's life is the imparted life of Christ, it must be imparted to us by God. To think of it in any other way would probably land us in Arianism which gave to Christ an intermediate position between God and man. Therefore the Eucharist, in which our minds are filled with thoughts of Christ, is yet pre-eminently a worship directed to God the Father Almighty. We are not only celebrating a sacrament, but we are offering the Sacrifice of Christ to God.

Is the idea of the Sacrifice of Christ too difficult for the minds of children and for ordinary congregations unused to abstract thinking and unversed in philosophy? Everybody's understanding of the Faith can only be within the limits of their own intelligence, but there is no necessity to embark on philosophy or in abstract thought in stating the doctrine of the Atonement.

The essential truth or fact is that God became Man in the life of Jesus, and that Christ offered His life to God to be the life of the Catholic Church and every member of it. That is not very difficult to teach or to learn for those who believe that the

Catholic Church is a supernatural society, let us say, God's society. It will not work in with undenominationalism or with the loose idea that one form of church is as good as another if that is what you like. It involves a strong and devoted view of membership, a sacramental teaching and practice, and a real belief in God's grace. The philosophy and the abstract thought lie behind the teaching of the Sacrifice as they lie behind the very idea of God. Volumes of dissertation and apologetic support the first article of the Creed, but the child learns it by being told simply and by saying his prayers. So the child can be taught simply that Christ was the Son of God and gave His life on the Cross that the Church might live for Christ; that his baptism made him a member of a holy society in which Absolution and Confirmation and Communion bring him the renewal and strength of that divine life; and he will learn the truth of it, first, by being told and, secondly, by his Sunday worship when the Bread and Wine are Jesus offering Himself to give us life.

These are baby terms, and the training of the adult congregation will go beyond them; but after all they are, according to the Synoptic Gospels, the terms in which Christ taught the Apostles a lesson which probably at the moment they hardly comprehended. I hold it to be true that, though we cannot rise to an adequate conception of Deity or of Christian truth without the aid of all the knowledge and thought that education gives us, yet all that is vital in Christian faith can still be held and expressed in the simplest forms and terms. Knowledge raises questions in the mind, and knowledge

must find the answers to them ; but the teacher of children has to leave most of those things behind when he goes into catechism on Sunday afternoon. To go a step further, it is more important for the savant to test his faith in God by the faith of a little child than the reverse process. So with the Sacrifice of Christ ; if the Cross is really the central doctrine of Christianity, it must be a doctrine which simple people can grasp as well as learned philosophers. A doctrine which means nothing to the untutored mind is as much suspect as one which will not bear intellectual criticism.

I happen to be writing these words on a verandah in the Territory of New Guinea. Bare-bodied black Christians are bustling about the house. They would not think it irreverent to speak of God as ' Big Fella Master, Him stop along top,' a jargon, by the way, forced upon them by the superior white man and not representing their own thought. I maintain that they are capable of believing that the life which Jesus Christ offered on the Cross is shared by themselves, is embodied in the Catholic Church, is offered to God day by day in the Eucharist. The same doctrine may be commended to the follower of Plato or Plotinus, and to an emergent evolutionist. If there are thinkers, individualists, experimentalists, who can make nothing of it, all the worse for their thought.

We spoke of the Real Presence depending on the Sacrifice rather than vice versa. What we mean is that when Christ gave to bread and wine the meaning, or in the language of a later philosophy the substance, of the Body and Blood, it was His sacri-

ficed life that He was presenting and imparting to them as a foretaste of the new life of the kingdom of God. The reality of the Presence, the very meaning of spiritual presence, the adequacy of such an expression as change of substance, all depend on the belief that Christian life is supernatural and the Church a supernatural organism. The word 'supernatural' here does not mean contravening physical nature. The nature of Christ is something above human nature. His life is shared by us through an organism, and that organism is the vehicle of His life, and its organic acts are in that sense supernatural. The Church is the organism of the life of Christ; the Sacraments its organic acts. The Real Presence is attached to the material things, bread and wine, because through them the Church offers the Sacrifice of Christ.

Receptionism followed the Reformation in which the sense of Churchmanship was weakened. The organic nature of the Church fell into the background, and so the Presence was made relative to the individual communicant rather than to the living Church. The Body of Christ became only a gift by Christ to man and not an offering to God.

A more peculiar view attaches and confines the Presence to the service as a function, allowing an extension of it in a subsequent Communion when the Sacrament has been reserved for that purpose. We can see here a move back to the idea of sacrifice. It is true that the bread and wine are consecrated in or by the liturgy, but it is the Sacrifice of Christ which makes our service, not our service which makes the Sacrifice. To think of the Presence of

Christ being withdrawn by the close of the service is to give to the human function an altogether exaggerated if not superstitious importance. To express the same objection differently, to attach the Presence to a particular Eucharist is to make the Sacrifice in the Eucharist something different from the Sacrifice of Christ, which is a doctrine not to be entertained.

There is no danger of magic, idolatry, or whatever it is that is feared, if the Church takes the traditional and scriptural ground that the Eucharist is the offering of the Sacrifice of Christ and the Eucharistic Gifts are the Body and Blood of Christ being offered—not by a priestly gesture nor by congregational prayer but by Christ—to give life to His people in the Church or kingdom of God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LIFE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE two constructive ideas with which we have dealt have been that of the kingdom of God and the Sacrifice of Christ. They are ideas; but they are first and foremost facts and events in the history of man.

Christ did undertake to produce in the order of events the indistinct dream of prophets and apocalyptists, and with Himself as King to inaugurate the kingdom of God upon earth. And it happened. A Church arose from the tomb on the Resurrection morning and became endued with power which was sufficient, through all the vicissitudes to which a human society was subject, to win the allegiance of mankind.

And here we must meet the question whether the Church and the kingdom of God are identical. I venture to suggest that the progress made during the last twenty-five years in the interpretation of the Gospels has made that question out of date. Of course it is true that the Church existed on the morning of Pentecost and that we still look for the coming in its fullness of the kingdom of God. But in saying that, we are comparing the Church in one aspect of its being with the kingdom in another

aspect. The kingdom of God also came with power by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. As salvation already is ours, and yet is a process always in operation, so the kingdom arrived yet still is in process of becoming.

The Cross and Resurrection procured our salvation, won the kingdom and called into life the Church, and in that sense the Atonement was complete. In another sense, not surely difficult to distinguish, the Atonement is not complete until all the life of man both individual and social is redeemed from sin and refashioned in conformity with the life of Christ. Let us grant that the terms 'Church' and *ecclesia* are rather static, and denote the thing as it is at any given moment, while the Lord's term 'kingdom' is more active and turns attention to its unfinished work. But in the actual life of mankind the Church and the kingdom of God are the same thing, the organ of Christ's life which is to remake the whole of human life.

This identification of the kingdom of God and the Church is not in accord either with pious interpretation or perhaps the prevailing scholarship of the present day. I maintain that we are misinterpreting the New Testament and lowering the true conception of the Church in distinguishing the terms. In S. Paul's Epistles it seems more than probable that the time of the Church was regarded as a short interval (limited to a lifetime) between the Lord's Resurrection and the coming of the Messianic kingdom. That kingdom was to be supernatural but earthly. It was itself preliminary to the delivering up of the kingdom to God.

Nevertheless, in the Church, according to S. Paul, they had an earnest of the Spirit, they had died and risen again by baptism, Christ was in them, they were in Christ, the life of the Church was already supernatural—in short, the order of the Messianic kingdom was already operative in part. If this was S. Paul's idea, and it seems very difficult to make sense otherwise of his teaching without evacuating his language of meaning, we may as well admit that S. Paul was mistaken in this theorizing, but right in his realism. In the teaching of Christ there was, as we have seen, the suggestion that 'the end' was to be deferred for an indefinite time, but there was no suggestion that the coming of the kingdom was to be postponed. We ourselves are actually not expecting any *parousia* except the final judgement, which is not what either Christ or S. Paul mean by the *parousia*. The only conclusion is that the kingdom of Christ came with His Resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit; in other words, that the Catholic Church is the kingdom of Christ. As Mr. Christopher Dawson points out in his latest book (*Enquiries*, p. 255), S. Augustine recognized that the abandonment of Milleniarism involves the identification of the Church with the kingdom of the Apocalypse. 'The Church even now is the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Heaven' (*De Civitate Dei*, xx. x).

It is entirely unscriptural to regard the kingdom of God as an ethical ideal of which the Church is the instrument or vehicle. Both the Church and the kingdom are militant, both the kingdom and the Church have yet to be consummated.

What really matters is not the academic correctness of our terms, but whether, on the one hand, we believe that the Church, what it has been, is, and is yet to be, is the divine object of Christ's ministry and Sacrifice; or whether, on the other hand, we regard the Church or Churches as a temporary expedient for the forwarding of the good purpose of God. This, I suggest, will be the cleavage between the Catholicism and Protestantism of the future. The former is revealed Christianity, the latter is humanism.

The Church, then, not only survived the Apostolic age, but by moral and spiritual force controlled the long-drawn disruption of the Roman Empire, the invasion of heathen races, and the gradual replacement of one civilization by another.

While it developed itself, its doctrine and its order, with fierce struggles against heresy and schism, it gave laws and order, education and art, to a new world. It was a defence against the arbitrary power of kings and ruling classes. It set up a new standard of right and wrong in the affairs of men. Its holy days were the holidays of the people. It set bounds to avarice. It produced martyrs in the days when the world hated it, and saints when the world was at its feet. There were saints who reformed and administered and guided, and saints who forsook the world and held up an ideal of other-worldliness. In the welter of history there was need and room for both. And there were saints, lowly men, who mingled in the common life of men while denying themselves its ease, its pleasures, and its advancements.

There is another side to this story of beneficence : a tale of contamination by the world, of selfishness, intrigue, cruelty, lust of power, and oppression. The world was often too much for the individuals who led the Church ; and when the Renaissance and the subsequent times of change came, with a revival of learning and criticism of institutions, new demands for liberty and fresh conceptions of nationalism, the Church was not in a fit state either to guide the tendencies of civilization or to avert its own disruption. Division had already appeared, and now came again within the Church, of different sections which hold the Catholic ideal and are organically connected with the Apostolic Church ; while millions of Christians are separated from Catholicism and have lost, not only the Church order which is historically inseparable from the unity of the Church, but with it the sacramental faith and practice which is essential to the new covenant of the religion of Christ.

We may suppose that the reunion of Christendom in the providence of God waits for a restoration of common faith in the promises of Christ made to the Church, and for a new adjustment of the discipline of Church membership and the morality of members of the Church to the pagan and commercialized civilization of the world in which we live.

The strength of the Church even in times when it has wielded a vast political power has always been the simple faith of its ordinary members, the belief that in its life lies the salvation of the soul and the will of God. Life in the Catholic Church is a discipline and a freedom in which grace is the chief

factor. Grace is expressed in Sacraments which make membership, communion, and absolution from sins committed the condition and the events of spiritual life; while the continual offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice brings into the present, into an act of worship, the source from which flows the reality and power of the Christian religion.

It is the life of Christ which guarantees the permanence and the future of the Catholic Church. However sinful a member of the Church may know himself to be, he never doubts that the life set before him in his religion is pure righteousness. Right and wrong have for him an absolute value, and right is the affirmation of his spiritual life and wrong or sin is the denial of it. Even if religion may not always tell him clearly what is right and what is wrong, and in the growing complexity of social life at least such problems do arise, still the basis of the Christian and Catholic life is so absolutely certain to him, that he knows the ultimate right for himself and for the world is to be found in a more faithful acceptance of the life imparted to him by the grace of Christ.

Among the competitors with Christianity for the world's choice of a standard and a sanction for morality are the growth of knowledge, the spread of civilization, stringency of law, weight of public opinion, racial dignity, humanism, *noblesse oblige*, self-respect, and self-expression. There is every reasonable cause for a growing and complete disillusionment in regard to all these forces, and there are even many who can see something heroic in defying the wrath of an Almighty God; but there is no one who has accepted the life of Christ as his

own who can think of goodness as anything less than his duty, or of wrongdoing as anything less than sin. A Christian does not practise religion in order that he may be moral; he is moral in order that he may be religious. To explain that, in order that he may function in accordance with his proper being, which is religious, he must act according to the spirit and principles of religion, which is morally. That is why religion—and the Catholic religion in particular—is the only absolute sanction for morality.

When we were speaking of salvation and redemption we said that Christ, having achieved it in His own human life, now accomplishes it in each and every soul which is to be saved. We begin by being saved by the act of incorporation into the kingdom of God, i.e. by baptism, but that salvation has to become actual in the process of a human life. From child to manhood and on to old age the process of salvation continues.

So it is also in the larger life of the world. The Catholic Church is not a backwater in the moving stream of human life. Christ's enthusiasm for the kingdom was an enthusiasm for humanity to be brought within the kingdom, and the salvation entrusted to the Church is to be the saving of the world. A man cannot be saved as a Churchman and remain unsaved as a member of society.

It is in contact with the world that the whole problem of right and wrong arises in human life, and therefore there can be no department of human life in which right and wrong is indifferent, and in which religion is not to show what is right. This

may seem like wrapping up platitudes in ponderous phrases, but the point I am urging is that it is part of the Church's life, its impact on the world, to condemn as sin all that is recognizably evil in human life, and to insist that morality is not attained while the evil continues. This is not a platitude. Thousands of people both within and without the Church think that religion is concerned with individual piety and being as good as we can. Any actions or judgments outside those limits are condemned as interference unless they are so vague as to mean very little.

There has been some excuse for this attitude during the long period that political thought has been absorbed in party politics, but now that the living issues are becoming more and more economics and war, the eighth and sixth commandments of the Decalogue, the Church's real action on social life, is becoming more imperative. The gibes of young authors about the Church's futility in face of war, the cries of the poor oppressed by an economic system, go home. Where the Church obviously has failed is not in having been incapable of stopping the war, but in not condemning as sin the increasing nationalism of the age and the bringing of human life and organization into dependence on financial interests.

'Ye cannot serve God and mammon' is true of social as of individual life. The world is definitely serving mammon. The making of money, whether by nations or by controlling financial interests, has got ahead of the sense of responsibility for our brother man. If we cannot point the remedy for

the disgrace of life in the modern world we could at least be conscious of the sin and denounce it. If the whole Catholic Church, even divided as it is, had been conscious of the sin of covetousness in its modern manifestations, is there really any doubt that the world during the past century would have turned in a different direction from that which brought it to its present pass? But the Church has not only failed to convince the world of sin, by failing to see it or denounce it, it has partaken of the sin itself. Socialists denounced the wrong, with the result that the only 'socialism' which has succeeded, and will possibly succeed more, is anti-Christian, immoral, and anti-social. These words may be the overstatement of impatience. The leaven may yet be at work to leaven the whole lump, a process which is likened to the kingdom of God.

What, then, is the life of the kingdom? In the beginning of this essay the first question that seemed to need an answer was the question what purpose Christ set before Himself in His ministry. On the answer to that question depended the reason for the Crucifixion, the meaning of the Atonement, and the interpretation of the event which was the Catholic Church. The inauguration of a kingdom of God, the establishment by sacrifice of a new covenant, the giving of life to the kingdom, the sacramental nature of the Church, and its sacramental system of grace and worship are consecutive ideas and form the consistent whole which we call the Catholic religion.

We now ask a similar question in regard to the Church as we did in regard to Christ. What pur-

pose is set before us in the Church, or better still, what purpose does the Church set before itself? It is a question which is much asked. It is asked by critics inclined to be hostile, by the quite satisfied and probably respectable member of society whose upbringing and environment create a moral atmosphere of which he himself approves without bothering the Church. It is asked by the growing errand boy who finds that religion is not half as easy as it was in his schooldays; and it is asked by ourselves at recurring periods of life when worship loses its glamour and religion seems to be ineffective in our own life or in the life of the world about us.

The answer to this question is twofold; the programme of the Christian's life in the Church, and the programme of the Church's relations with the world. In actual life the two programmes overlap; the Church does not exist apart from its members, who alone can carry out its corporate purpose; while, on the other hand, their spiritual life must depend on their taking part in the Church's work in the world.

So, first, the individual Christian, because he is a Christian, will know that loyalty to Christ is loyalty to the kingdom of God, and that loyalty to the kingdom of God is loyalty to the Catholic Church. We may even start a step further back and put it that a man of goodwill, knowing in himself and seeing in others the danger of being unworthy of his manhood, will perceive that loyalty to some one external to himself is the true law of his being, and will find in Christ the only leader that draws humanity to its divine source and goal. Life and loyalty

in the kingdom of the Church will be a discipline, an order of duties, of regular habits, of common action ; for life which is based on Experience and Group enthusiasm only is never lasting. Some duties are laid down as of obligation, others as proper acts of devotion. The whole is designed with the experience that human beings in the world are of different temperaments and vocations, and the rule of obligation is the minimum to characterize a life lived in grace, and behind that is the system of penance or absolution for the recovery of those who have fallen out.

The plan of the Church is that no one who has been baptized into the kingdom of grace should be allowed permanently to fall short of it. To some this may seem a low ideal. But in fact it is not an ideal at all. It is a workaday provision of a divine community which yet is dealing with a world of flesh and blood. By Christians who are not Catholics, Catholicism is sometimes criticized for being too severe and rigorous, for imposing a rule of life instead of leaving everything to the liberty, the spontaneity, of the individual. By others it is blamed for formalism, and being too easy-going, as a comfortable religion. There must be these two elements, order and liberty, in all organization of life. Non-Catholic systems do not escape them. The Church's rigorism is not that of the hard, unforgiving Puritanism of which we read in books and plays ; its formalism is not that of the popular Protestantism which makes no demands on its adherents except a conventional adhesion.

But the setting up of a minimum is not its ideal.

The precepts of the Church, which can be read on the fly-leaf of many books of devotion, prescribe the minimum to preserve the sacramental character of membership in the Church. But they are being exceeded by thousands not from a sense of obligation to human authority but because they delight to do so. The Catholic life is the pursuit of an ideal. To love God more, to serve in prayer and adoration, to work harder for the cause of Christ, to deny much in the world not only of what is dangerous or unlawful, if the denial frees one for better work, such is the purpose of life in the Church. For that ideal there is a continual conflict with temptations, and of all temptations selfishness and pride is most to be resisted, because of all sins the exaggeration of self is most opposed to devotion to Christ and union with Him, which is the ultimate ideal.

Two themes run through this programme of the individual life. One is that it is a life in a visible kingdom of God; and the other is that it is a participation in the life of Christ.

The other programme is of the Church's life in the world. The love of Christ which was the spring of all His purpose, of the kingdom of God and the Atoning Sacrifice alike, was the love of which S. John writes when he says, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' The kingdom was to be for the salvation of men, but men were to be saved that the kingdom might save the world.

As grace works in the individual member, so the Church is to work in the world. To avoid an

ultimate dualism between the world and the kingdom of God we must believe that the world, God's world, is capable of being permeated by the life of the kingdom or Church. The easiest way to describe this permeation seems to be to show how the principles of the kingdom are applicable also to the world.

The programme of the Church's relations to the world is thus the establishment of its principles in the world. In order to do this it must make the people of the world to become also the people of the kingdom of God. The laws of the kingdom cannot be conceived to operate apart from faith and apart from grace.

Missionary work stands in the forefront of the programme, but to put the two activities as consecutive in time, to say first convert people to the Catholic Church and then establish the laws of liberty and love and unselfishness, is not at all the method of Christ. Even as individuals that is not how we learn Christianity. It would be a travesty of missionary work to teach a heathen race belief and sacraments and worship before dealing with cruelty and unchastity and ignorance. Morality and religion are one order in Christian philosophy. The inculcation on the world of Christian morals and the conversion to Christian faith must advance *pari passu* in the civilized world as in the mission field. The profession of Christian faith combined with the toleration of political and economic systems which are patently immoral by Christian standards has been the chief fault of the Church.

The Church's task now is to press new moral

standards upon the world, and the moral standards are to be drawn from the Church's own principles of life. The arch-principle of the Church's being is love. Under that we can recognize equality. It will be an equality of value, not an equality of function. In the natural family parent is set over child; in the kingdom of God there are elders, there are those who sit on twelve thrones, those set over us in the Lord. So in the new world there will be order. But without doubt we are all to regard one another as children of one Father, we are all concluded under sin, we are all partakers of one Bread. The equal value of all human lives is to be understood as a principle of the kingdom. It is to be applied in a political and economic sense to the ordering of a Christian state.

Mercy and pity towards the weak, the erring, and the ignorant is a principle that cannot be detached from the arch-principle of love. The action of Christ and the Apostles following Him during the ministry of preparing the kingdom, the first Word from the Cross, the Cross itself as the historical frame of the Sacrifice, prove that care for the weak rather than selection of the strong is the principle of the kingdom of God. On this much interesting speculation of modern ethics goes overboard at once. More important, much of the incidence of present-day standards of competition stands condemned.

A common responsibility for service seems to be expected of all members of the kingdom. The life of Christ in which all are partakers is essentially a life of service. According to S. Paul or S. Luke, Christ Himself said that it is more blessed to give

than to receive. His parables of the kingdom often liken the members to servants entrusted with their tasks. The disciples as nucleus of the kingdom are called primarily to work, and it is not to be supposed that their life is different in kind from that of all who should become believers. The very spirit of life in the kingdom is enshrined in Christ's own words that whosoever shall lose his life in this world shall save it unto life eternal. The duty then, and with it the call and opportunity to work, provides a principle of very obvious application to a Christian world. Ruskin long ago pointed out the force of the words, 'I will give unto this last even as unto thee.'

Following this, the common claim to reward, though it be the free gift of the Father, is promised to all alike. The gifts of grace, like the rain and the sunshine, are declared to be the expectation of all. There is no merit in works apart from the one condition of willingness to work.

No doubt we could extract other principles from the method of the kingdom, but there is no code of Christian ethics given to us from the mount either of Horeb or Calvary. The kingdom of God is to work out its own salvation within the perfect law of liberty. It is free to make its own regulations, to bind and to loose, provided it is true to the law of love and its own nature, which is the life of Christ. But love, the equality in value of living souls, mercy to the weak, responsibility for service, the common share in the gifts of grace, belong to the social ethic of the kingdom of God,—these are principles not only recognized and necessary in the life of the

Church but applicable to the life of man in his social and economic relations in the world. Capable of being applied in the attitude of man to man, class to class, nation to nation, and race to race, they ought to be applied according to the Christian religion, and no Christian is whole in the faith if he thinks less.

There is a time for all things. In the days of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire the Christian Church could not forbid war. Now when the world's systems of war and finance have reached breaking point, and the world itself is looking for some way to change, is the opportunity of the Christian Church. The principles of the kingdom are an ideal. No reasonable person has ever expected, and Catholicism has never taught, that every sword could be beaten into a ploughshare to-morrow. But because the Christian Church was unduly long (as it seems to us) in condemning slavery, and should have been more persistent and convinced in condemning the arbitrament of war, it does not follow that freedom and peace are not necessary applications of Christian life. Submission to an impartial umpire is a definitely Christian alternative to war, but inasmuch as impartiality is seldom in practice above suspicion, it is still more the duty of Christians to insist on an internal policy in their own nations which shall respect the interests of other nations as much as their own.

As a contrast to this the tendency in these days is for nations to become more and more nationalist. Tariffs, 'Buy British,' 'See England,' are slogans and policies merely repeated in different countries

with a change of a word. Immigration laws are making movement from one country to another more difficult. Colonies are held as preserves for the trade of the nation in possession. If we treated one another as we treat ourselves it would not matter who administered the former German colonies, there would be neither reasons for nor against the Polish corridor. Nations for greed, distrust, and jealousy are being organized as if their interests were mutually exclusive. We know it is both wrong and silly, we feel it to be all out of date, we know these are the causes of war. Anybody who has been about a bit knows that the people of other countries are not necessarily more aggressive, stuffy, and in other ways objectionable than our own. Still nationalism is on the increase, perhaps because Christianity is not.

Again, the sacrifice of a Life for the salvation of the whole world is the essential fact of the Christian religion. A divine community devoted to service is its organ. The offering and partaking of one Bread and one Cup is its perpetual symbol. It is impossible for the Church to be true to this nature and at the same time to acquiesce in an economic system which manufactures poverty out of the very abundance which the world possesses.

Discovery, transport, and applied science have produced a state of abundance. Science every year is reducing the need of human labour. Instead of the natural result of plenty, and increased leisure for all, a large proportion in every nation is refused a share in production and reduced to penury; while those who do work are victims of a grinding system

with very little leisure or holidays, and with a perpetual fear of losing their jobs and their livelihood. We need not deny there is a problem. The watertight compartments into which nationalism divides the peoples make it all the more difficult to treat it. There is all the inconvenience of being dependent on common action and none of the advantages of being able to act in common. We are worshipping money instead of exchanging our goods. If it be true that economic and political science has lagged so far behind the progress of mechanical science, and that the civilized world is so crass that it cannot use the progress it has made without sentencing to poverty an increasing proportion of its citizens, it is a fairly irresistible inference that there are influences at work which hinder economic development and resist any adaptation of the means of distribution. These influences the Church should be denouncing as sin.

The demand for attention to the problem has come from those who suffer from the system or are in fear of doing so, and only to a very limited and inarticulate extent from those who ought to believe that they stand for Christ in the world. It is obvious that the economic system is morally wrong; and the wrongness consists in a direct denial of the principle of the Church's own life. That we should allow the employment, the livelihood, the welfare of men to depend on money, whether gold or sterling, metal or paper, and not on their willingness to share the work is sin. 'We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? . . . Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto

obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness ? ' (*Rom.* vi. 2, 16).

The social teaching of Christianity has been a comparative failure because it has been put on the wrong basis. By a paradox Christians have failed to be moral because the whole matter has been treated as a question of the moral implications of the Gospel.

Preachers have talked of the kingdom of God as if it meant the reign of social righteousness. We have known all the time that it meant nothing of the sort. We have dwelt on the Church of the Incarnation, implying that the Church is pledged to social principles, but the principles have seldom been raised above prevailing human standards. The reason for the Incarnation was the Atonement, but we have been too afraid or too polite to think of the Church of the Atonement, which would have been a witness against the world's sin. We have preferred a politics of parties and opportunism to ranging ourselves against sin.

The kingdom of God is the Catholic Church, existing itself and in its members by the life of Christ sacrificed upon the Cross. It is pledged to live that life and strengthened by grace to do so in defiance of the world's standards. It exists to remake the world, first, by living true to its own life; secondly, by expending every effort to make the world a place in which it can be lived; and thirdly, by converting all men to its life.

The Church is the effect of the Atoning Sacrifice, and the Atonement was an atonement for sin. When

Jesus Christ heard with joy S. Peter confessing the truth of His Christhood and saw the kingdom of God thus accepted as the following of Himself, He knew at once that there remained the need of the Sacrifice which would give to the kingdom a life which should be the denial of sin. The Church in which Christ lives, lives still by the denial of sin.

It is impossible to deny sin, if one has not the sense of sin. But further, the sense of sin which only has regard to our individual deficiencies is not the sense of sin which Christ felt.

Judas, Caiaphas, and Pilate were guilty men ; but the world might very well excuse the two last on the score of expediency ; and as for Judas, if we put aside romance, his trouble was a love of money following a breakdown in faith. He probably felt he might as well secure his own position as his company was going to crash anyhow. It was not the sins of individuals which crucified Christ. Caiaphas was backed up by the whole sacred college ; Pilate was bending justice in the interests of order.

When the Church more certainly sees sin in the collective pride, injustice, and indolence of the world ; when it sees selfishness in consenting to affluence while others are unfed ; when it hates the wickedness of the things which cause the world's evils : then the Church will be a step nearer to living the life which is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.

As the mystics find in their search for union with God that there is a negative path and a positive path which they must tread, so it is in the journey to the city of God. The *via negativa*, which must first

be followed, is the way of repentance when we see sin. The accepted standards of the soldier, the publican, the Pharisee, and the well-dressed man are no more sufficient now than they were at Bethabara beyond Jordan. We must see them to be sin and repent. 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' said the crowd. 'Repent,' says Peter, 'and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' Emotional repentance is useless here. Very definite must be the conversion on the negative way rejecting the sin which separates nations and sets them consulting for their own interests in defiance of others; the sin which values bread by money, and houses by money, instead of bread by houses with money as a means of exchange; the sin which allows overwork and unemployment for the sake of gain in which neither the overworked nor the unemployed share; the sin of buying money on speculation, and trading on encouraged ignorance, of making weapons and material of destruction for a quarrel in which the profiteer has no part. 'Bring forth fruits of repentance,' is the warning of the gatekeeper to the negative way. The Son of Man must be crucified and rise to a new life is the message which marks progress upon it.

And the *via unitiva* is the way which unites the world to the kingdom of God. It is not a code of laws to be enforced on a world without, though the principles of the kingdom are discernible enough. They may form our programme for the time being, but even if they are recognized, their application will be difficult. But the unitive way is a new spirit,

the Christ-spirit, in politics, industry, and commerce, and the lives of men. It is not a vision which is yet for many days. The Church and kingdom of God is among us. We members of the Church miss the way because we are only occupied with our own souls; the world misses the way because it is occupied with its bodies; but if we could both come to take notice of the sin that is being done, the way leads straightforward from the atoning Cross to a new life for all men.

The kingdom of God is not social righteousness. It is dangerously easy to be misled by zeal into such claptrap. The kingdom of God is a close corporation, but it must be socially righteous. We cannot blame the world for its social sins and at the same time partake of them cheerfully. The Church of the Atonement must conquer worldliness and convert the world; for 'God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.'

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